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STUDIES IN THE SPIRIT
AND TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY



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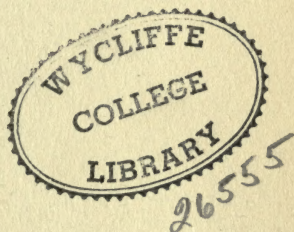
TORONTO

STUDIES IN THE SPIRIT AND TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY

BEING
UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOL SERMONS

BY
WILLIAM TEMPLE, M.A.

RECTOR OF ST. JAMES', PICCADILLY, CHAPLAIN TO THE ARCHBISHOP
OF CANTERBURY, SOMETIME HEADMASTER OF REPTON



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1914

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THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED
WITH DEEP AFFECTION AND REGARD
TO THE RIGHT REVEREND
CHARLES GORE, D.D.
LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD
FROM WHOM I HAVE LEARNT
MORE THAN FROM ANY OTHER NOW LIVING
OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY
AND TO WHOM MORE THAN TO ANY OTHER
(DESPITE GREAT DIFFERENCES)
I OWE MY DEGREE OF APPREHENSION
OF ITS TRUTH

PREFACE

AT the end of my first two years at Repton various friends urged me to publish a volume of *Repton School Sermons*. It then seemed better, if I was to publish at all, that I should publish the whole series as I had preached them.

In this volume I have not followed that course, but have selected some that, in a small degree at least, find completion in one another and so give to the collection an element of unity. The volume consists of three University sermons, one sermon preached in Manchester Cathedral, which belongs to the same type, and a selection from my school sermons between September, 1912, and July, 1914.

Three special acknowledgments I must make: to the Bishop of Oxford, to whom I owe the underlying idea and some even

of the phraseology of Sermon VI; to the anonymous work *The Practice of Christianity*, from which Sermon XVIII is largely borrowed; and to Francis Thompson, for the inspiration of his supremely great poem *The Hound of Heaven*.

W. T.

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UNIVERSITY SERMONS

STUDIES IN THE SPIRIT AND TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY

I

SPIRIT AND TRUTH

Cambridge. *October 15, 1911*

S. John, iv. 24.—“God is Spirit ; and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

SPIRIT and truth are the two supreme requirements. And the words are far more full of meaning than we commonly remember. Spirit is of course not limited by space ; and they who worship in spirit need not confine their worship to Jerusalem or Mount Gerizim, to Church or Chapel. Truth is opposed to formalism and hypocrisy ; and they who worship in truth will not be going to Church to be seen of men, or, as we phrase

it, to set a good example. So much is obvious ; but far more is required than this.

Spirit, as the word is used in the New Testament, is always a driving force. The Spirit drove our Lord into the wilderness ; the Spirit often manifested itself by producing an excitement so intense that men poured out inarticulate sounds, which led the casual onlooker to suppose they were intoxicated, but which communicated to the sympathetic the excitement from which it sprang, so that to Parthians and Medes and Elamites it was charged with meaning and seemed like their own language. "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day" is St John's introduction of the chaotic riot of his apocalyptic vision.

It is true that St. Paul rather disparages these violent exhibitions of spirituality ; more **excellent** than speaking with tongues or prophecy is love, without which they are as sounding brass or as clanging cymbals. The fruit of the Spirit is love and joy and peace. But, as compared with our ordinary habit of mind, this is every bit as odd as the other manifestations, and involves a change

quite as radical. Few things would more completely change the habits of our most estimable and respected acquaintances than that they should take to loving their neighbours as themselves. Our own personal conduct would of course be utterly revolutionised.

God is Spirit, and if we would worship Him, we must worship in Spirit. He is eternal energy and activity ; and our worship must be the work of a Spirit which takes hold of our lives and habits of thought and changes them, urging us to new activities and unforeseen sacrifice.

But it is upon the other quality required of us that I would especially insist to-day. Our worship is to be in truth. For this it is not only necessary that we should be free from hypocrisy and say what we mean ; we must mean what is true.

The conscious demand for truth has never been so insistent as it is now. No doubt people always wish that what they are taught about life and the world they live in should be true. But just now men are demanding that every statement should be tested by

the most rigorous canon. There is a great hunger for religion in the mass of our people, but it refuses to be satisfied with anything less than truth. The responsibility thus thrown upon the Universities and all students in them is immense; for here, if at all, that thinking must be done which shall either deliver us from the grip of a dead superstition or shall make religious faith the controlling influence of the nation's life.

Probably there are some here who are now beginning their University course. To them I would say that during the years they are here close thinking, wide-reading, relentless criticism are their primary duty. Your faculties are probably not far from their full development; you will gain knowledge and experience as the years pass, but your power of dealing with what knowledge and experience you have is probably almost as great as it will become. And you have no intellectual responsibility. You are now as always responsible for your character and moral influence, but not for your intellectual opinions. No one is going to accept a position because you believe in it; no one is going to charge

you with inconsistency if, under the influence of argument or growing experience, you change your position almost daily. You may think for yourselves and say the whole of what you think at every moment of life. This combination of intellectual power with freedom from intellectual responsibility makes serious undergraduate conversation the most delightful, because the most spontaneous, conversation in the world ; but it also constitutes an opportunity for thought and frank discussion which will not return, and of which it is your sacred duty to make use.

There are great problems lying upon the mind of our fellow-countrymen. Here if anywhere the work must be done which may lift their weight. But it must be done fearlessly. Here as in all departments of life we are called to risk what is dearest to us in the service of the kingdom of God ; if the Christian faith is to be set forth as the answer to all our perplexities in practical and theoretical matters alike, men must be searching for its truth in a manner that may lead to the loss of their own faith alike in Christ and in God. Nothing must be held back ; no sweet hope or dear

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remembrance may be exempted from the searching criticism ; many will fail in the effort and share with Christ the sense that God has forsaken them, but at the last Truth will stand out clear to the mind and potent to the will ; and if indeed Christ is the Truth, the result of our mental toil and anguish will be the exaltation of our Master.

But as we think thus closely and critically we shall not make the foolish mistake of supposing that in our own individual experience we have all the data required for the solution of the problem. In no department of life is this the case : we do not suppose, for example, that on the basis of our personal experience we are qualified to utter final pronouncements upon all the laws and customs that regulate our social life. Yet some men are prepared, almost without hesitation, to set aside some article of the Creed or even the whole religious experience of mankind, simply because their own experience gives no warrant for it. That of course is just silly. It is always possible no doubt that the Church is in error, but the initial probability on the other side is always quite immense, for the pronouncements of the

Church are the results of careful and scientific thinking upon a vast mass of accumulated experience.

And so as we think we shall remember the immense authority that attaches to the Christian doctrine. We shall not pretend that we have a personal belief in anything which fails to grip us ; but while we try to live by what comes home to ourselves, we shall by no means reject other doctrines unless we can prove them erroneous ; rather we shall be searching for the power in them to which they owe their place in the Catholic faith. And it may be that when all the world seems baffling and there is none to solve the riddle—when we see not our tokens and there is not one prophet more—when evil thrives unrebuked and innocence suffers helplessly, and voices all around are calling on us to deny God, then it will only be the faith of the heroes of the past, and of the corporate Church, that will steady us and make us look again ere we abandon what has done so great things for men : “ I had almost said even as they ; but lo ! then I should have condemned the generation of thy children.”

And if we are wise, we shall hold to our religious observances, even though for a period they mean nothing to us and our intellectual position is utterly agnostic. There is no dishonesty in this. Unless we go to Church to set a good example, our motives for going are no business of anyone but ourselves. And we may hold to our Church-attendance and to our Communion because it is there that many people have found that intercourse with God which is the real basis of religious faith, and we may hope to find it there some day even if we have not found it yet. To abandon religious observances because we are not sure of our theology is to exclude half the evidence until after the sentence is pronounced.

Some no doubt will always be able to recall moments in their own life when they knew beyond all possibility of dispute that they held intercourse with God—

He who has felt the Spirit of the Highest
 Cannot confound nor doubt Him nor deny ;
 Yea, with one voice, O world, though thou deniest ;
 Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.

But if there are any who cannot take their

stand on the remembrance of such occurrences in their own lives, let them weigh carefully the testimony of the saints in every generation before they submit to the denial of the hope of mankind. Our duty is to think ; but if we are to think scientifically, we must consider all the evidence.

And if we are to think scientifically we must eliminate all forms of selfishness. The scientific enquirer must put himself in the hands of his evidence and leave his predilections out of all account. It is hard to do this in religious matters, and many of us have never honestly made trial of the Christian faith, because we have allowed our selfishness to invade our religion, modifying our belief and dictating our religious conduct. We slip into speaking of the consolations of religion as if Christ's primary purpose had been to console, whereas His primary purpose was to found the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. We do not pray "Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done" with triumphant expectation and ungovernable hope ; we say, "Well, God's Will be done"—when we have found out that we can't have our own and reluctantly

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accept a second best. We even speak of Resignation as a virtue, whereas quite plainly it is a form of blasphemy; no one could be "resigned" to the purpose of Almighty Love. In our prayers, we ignore the model which Christ gave us, from which every selfish petition was excluded; we try to make use of God for our purposes instead of asking Him to make use of us for His. Often indeed we ignore Him altogether until we are in trouble. We are like the people described by the Psalmist:—"When He slew them they sought Him." But that is leaving it rather late. Most of us have never honestly and scientifically made trial of the Christian faith and consequently have never grasped the fulness of its truth.

A subtler form of selfishness or self-complacency which easily impairs the value of our religious thought is the tendency to suppose that all wisdom belongs to our own generation. A thing is not necessarily good because it is modern. No doubt if a religious belief is true it must meet the needs of each generation, and there is perpetual need for new application. But we tend unquestionably

to despise what is old in the region of belief and to accept uncritically what is recent. This is exactly as absurd as the opposite method.

“Old things need not be therefore true” ;

O brother men, nor yet the new.

And the absurdity reaches its height when we are asked to accept, because it is modern, a view which has been familiar throughout the history of human thought ; as would be the case if this argument were adduced, as it sometimes is, in favour of that form of Agnosticism which consists in dogmatic fatalism, and replaces God by an impersonal system of natural laws which neither knows nor cares for us. The upholders of this view were familiar to the Psalmist : “Tush, say they, how should God perceive it ; is there knowledge with the most high ? ” Many modern theories are also ancient : and when it is otherwise their mere modernity is no evidence either for or against their truth.

But more insidious than either of these forms of selfishness or self-complacency is that self-centredness which leads us to take as true whatever satisfies our own or other people's cravings at the moment. This is a

modern pitfall, or at least the temptation to fall into it is keener now than ever. The confusion of democracy in the political world with mere voting has brought a temptation to count heads as the sure way of finding a just opinion. If a new doctrine or new statement of a doctrine proves "helpful" to very many people, this is taken as weighty evidence for its truth. It does show us indeed where the conscious need of people lies, and where therefore we should begin with our presentation of what we believe. But the popularity of a doctrine may be due, not only to the presence of a truth which people need, but also to the absence of a truth which they dislike. Those of us who teach, at least, are bound to resist the temptation to take the response evoked from our pupils or our congregations as a criterion of the truth of what we say. It has been pointed out that there is an allegory in that Old Testament story which tells how once Moses, the Prophet, was lingering on the mountain holding intercourse with God, while at its foot Aaron, the official priest, was purveying to the people the sort of god they liked. It was not a very dignified kind of

deity ; it was, as the Psalmist satirically says, "The similitude of a calf that eateth hay." But it was what the people liked ; and the response to Aaron's ministrations was immediate and immense.

I have said that the primary duty of men at a University is a relentless search for truth ; and that in that search exceeding weight must be allowed to the accumulated experience of the Church. That experience is briefly this—that he who hath seen Christ hath seen the Father. That is the hypothesis we have to test ; that is the faith of which we must make trial. What will it mean for us ?

First this, that as Christ is the crown, so He is the standard of all revelation ; and everything in Old Testament or other revelation which attributes to God a nature or character other than that of Christ must be rejected : the imperfection of all other revelation will lead to a presentation of God which is partially false. We must see that we are not setting up some Greek or Jewish theory of God, into which we read as much of Christ's revelation as we can ; we must begin with Christ Himself ; we have no clear vision of

God except in Him. "No man hath seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son hath declared Him."

But if so, then is it not some alleviation of the world's misery and sin that it is God Himself who invites us into His fellowship with the words, "If any man will come after Me, let him ignore himself?" It is God who answers our desire to share His glory with the words, "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?" It is God who pleads with us when we are slack or weary in discipleship. "Could ye not watch with Me one hour?" It is God with whom we are united as we enter into fellowship with Christ ; it is Heaven that we find as we devote ourselves a sacrifice for His sake.

Clearly there is much here to ponder ; clearly there is work for our intellect in testing and apprehending ; but clearly also this faith cannot be fully tested by anyone who merely sits and thinks. For it tells us that to forget ourselves in the service of man for the love of God is boundless happiness ; it tells us that the weary and heavy laden who turn to the Lord Jesus will find rest. Such promises must be tested

by life as well as thought. And so we are brought back from truth to spirit, from the truth which is revealed in Christ to the Spirit which proceeds from Him, remodelling our lives in the likeness of His life.

If we would test thoroughly the truth of the Christian faith, we must look out into the world and see what form of service we are called to. We must hear the cry of the heathen world ; we must appreciate the opportunity of the Church at this time when all the world is in process of transformation and it lies with us to determine whether the chief influence in its remodelling shall be the Spirit of Christ or some other ; we must hear the cry which day by day, from the streets of our cities and the lanes of our countryside, ascends to the throne of our Father through the lips of our Judge—"I am hungry, and ye give Me no meat." And we must dedicate our lives to the extension of God's kingdom whether in the Foreign Mission Field or in our own land. Unless we do this we simply are not Christians at all. For a man to choose his life's work for any consideration other than that of the service he can

render is the greatest sin that anyone can commit—far greater than lapses into indulgence or vice—for it is the deliberate withdrawal of most of his time from the obedience of God. And only as we obey shall we find the Truth of the faith or the power of the Spirit.

Those of us who have tried to yield ourselves to that Spirit and apply to our own perplexities that Truth, have found this to be for ourselves at least indisputable. Each successive perplexity dissolves and vanishes, like mists before the rising sun ; and every advance we make in the devotion of our lives to service of man for love of God brings fresh assurance that the power within us is the Spirit of the One True God, spending Himself in utter self-forgetfulness for love of His children, agonising as in Gethsemane or on Calvary until that love be returned, who when He is reviled reviles not again and when He suffers threatens not, whose glory the Heavens declare and the firmament sheweth His handiwork, and who shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

II

FAITH AND DOUBT

Oxford. *November 17, 1912.*

II. Tim. iv, 6-8.—For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness.

S. Mark xv, 34.—And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “. . . My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

THE New Testament is dominated by two personalities—St. Paul and our Lord Himself;—for St. John, though fully as influential as St. Paul, has effaced himself as the artist who paints a portrait tries to interpret his original but not to obtrude himself. And some sides of the fulness of our Lord's work and life are more plainly perceptible when com-

pared and contrasted with the work of His great Apostle.

St. Paul from the time of his conversion had spent himself in colossal activity for the cause of his Master. He had journeyed far and wide, he had founded churches all over Asia Minor, in Macedonia, and in Greece ; he had preached in Rome and perhaps also in Spain. It was a long life of noble service ; and in rendering it he had suffered ignominy, torture, and peril of his life. Remember his own account of it : “ Of the Jews five times received the forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep ; in journeying, often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from mine own countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in peril in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren ; in labour and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides these things that are without there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches.”

There had been many difficulties and many

perplexities. But on the whole he had overcome the difficulties, and solved the perplexities. He had been forced to think out everything again ; there was the old promise of God to the Jews, and he had been called to preach to the Gentiles ; there was the old Mosaic Law, Divinely instituted, and it had condemned Christ to the cross ; there was the sense of personal union with Christ, and sin was still undestroyed. These were terrible problems, and in his Epistles we see him wrestling with them. He had won his way through and never in all his struggles had his faith in God and Christ wavered. We see him a splendid heroic figure, towering over his companions, fighting his battles alone—often against great odds but always to a victorious issue. It was a noble career and on the whole distinctly a successful one. And at its close, as he knows that death is near, he can look back over it and say—“ The time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness.” The words are not an idle boast. We know their truth. We thank God for a hero

and a saint ; but we never dream, any more than St. Paul himself ever dreamt, that his life was in itself the revelation of God.

Now in contrast with that let us put the Life which has compelled men to regard itself as a revelation of God. We cannot indeed be perfectly sure what were the last words He uttered, but we know that almost at the end He was, for a time at least, possessed by absolute despair : " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me ? " Failure—blank, unrelieved failure—that seemed to be the issue of His toil and prayer. Yet it is He that men have worshipped and not the other.

It is not the fact of His apparent failure in His lifetime to which I would call attention ; for that is cancelled, and more than cancelled, by the increasing triumph of His cause as history proceeds, and indeed His death was part of His own plan for the winning of His Kingdom. But I call attention rather to His whole temper—the shrinking, the fear, the final despair. And, remember again, it is here that men have fallen on their knees in worship.

His life was at first full of the brightness of

an untroubled faith. He did not hurry about preaching His Gospel here, there, and everywhere; He confined himself to a small area, and the two journeys which He undertook beyond it were taken that He might withdraw from Jewish controversy and not that He might preach to the Gentiles. He has none of the gloom of the typical prophet. He does not ignore or despise small things; He has watched the birds and has delighted in the flowers. He is in no way remote or aloof. And as there is not the slightest evidence that He was given to introspection or to meditating upon His own personality, we may safely suppose that His own outlook upon life was full of joy and peace. But we, looking back at the story as the few recorded episodes and sayings sketch for us that wonderfully vivid portrait—we may see in quite early events in His life the elements of the struggle that was to come later. No sooner is He definitely called to the Messiahship than He feels Himself driven into the wilderness to grapple with Temptation—and one of the Temptations is directly a Temptation to infidelity. In His ministry he seems to be always accompanied

by friends, except in the times when He specially seeks solitude for prayer. But as we look more closely, the crowds that throng Him or the constant attendance of His disciples only emphasise His isolation. St. Paul was less attended; but we feel pretty sure that Timothy and Silas and Titus understood him, and we know that Peter and James and John scarcely understood at all the Master whose fascination bound them to His side. There is no more lonely figure imaginable than that of Christ as He enters Jerusalem to die there, while all the multitude are hailing Him with shouts of triumph.

We think of St. Paul and his long fight with foes of every kind—his splendid courage, his undaunted spirit. And we turn back to Christ, and see how He enters on the great contest of the world's history. He is marching on Jerusalem; the long-foretold Messiah is about to occupy His Kingdom's capital; and on the way the Leader of the campaign explains His plan to His staff: "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to

death." He had been striding on, sternly and steadfastly, with the wondering disciples following in fear. "They were in the way going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went before them; and they were amazed; and as they followed they were afraid." He makes no spirited assault upon the powers of evil; He does not press with cheery confidence into the battle; He shrinks from it. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." It is not only dread that weighs upon Him, but also perplexity. "He began to be sore amazed and to be very heavy." Yet as He struggled in prayer with His doubt and pain, His most intimate companions were asleep. At the arrest they all forsook Him. At last He was dying. No one believed on Him. For all His warnings not one soul, except a condemned criminal dying with Him, believed that by His death He was establishing His Kingdom. But if so—then His best appeal was failing. When all other appeals had failed, He still relied on the appeal of His death: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." He had staked everything upon the faith that God would act—would flash the

truth from His dying face into the hearts of His disciples : but God had not acted ; “ My God, my God, why has thou forsaken Me ? ”

No doubt that is not the end of the story ; the Resurrection was to follow, as He had Himself foretold. But He must first pass through that dark experience, and again let us remember that it is here that men are driven to kneel in worship.

Almost always in the life of our Lord we may think of the revelation which is given both of God and of men. And we may reflect that there is no loneliness like the loneliness of God, as He waits for His children's obedience and love ; and there is no agony like the disappointment of God, as we thwart and frustrate the efforts by which He seeks to bind us to Himself ; we reflect how by our opposition or indifference we turn the Love of God in upon itself, so changing the sunny, frank, spontaneous, generous affection of the early days into the passionate intensity of the tragic hero who marches before His followers to Jerusalem, and goes out in solitude to die.

But it is of the other side—the human side—

that I want to speak just now. For we know that in that dark hour on Calvary our Lord was more unmistakably divine than ever before. We know that there He entered most fully into the innermost Life of God. If we may use the language appropriate to our own lives, that was the climax of His religious experience. For the sense of failure and desertion was not the real truth of the matter. "Why has thou forsaken Me?" He cried. And the answer was the Resurrection.

We are here at the very centre of the mystery of man's life. And to-day I want only to point to two results. One is this: do not seek doubts and perplexities, but when they come of themselves do not shirk them. And if you try to think out your problems or if in your own struggles with temptation or sin it seems as if God had vanished from the world or from your soul, remember what Christ felt on the Cross and take heart again.

Secondly, the real and highest test of courage is when our deepest convictions are shaken. Christ is not less but more heroic for His agony and His despair. He is the "pattern and perfection of faith," as the

Epistle to the Hebrews calls Him, not because He was untroubled by doubt, but because He faced fully the worst perplexities that can come to a man, yet never changed His appointed course. Courage and faith are there as nowhere else in the world. We are very liable to misplace our admiration in these matters. We are thrilled by the man who fights cheerfully and without misgiving when defeat is a moral certainty—by the story of the Revenge or of Balaclava. But how much deeper is the courage of one who stands calm before Governor and High Priest when His own soul has just been racked with doubt, or who almost in the moment of His deepest agony can meet the traitor disciple with the words:—“Friend, do that for which thou art come.” His bearing is so far beyond all other courage that we often fail to recognise that it is courage at all. Christ is so strong that we often forget His strength; He is so heroic that we have never dared to class Him among the heroes.

All of this has much bearing, I am convinced, upon that distinction of the Once-Born and

the Twice-Born which William James has made familiar. He himself, of course, sums up in favour of the Twice-Born. The Once-Born are those sunny souls who look on life with placid eyes, and to whom God is not the austere Judge but the gentle Father : these, according to James, are winning, sympathetic folk but are liable to lack depth and force. The Twice-Born are those who feel the burden of evil as it exists in the world and in their own souls ; they see the world as an intolerable mystery and enigma, and their own souls are the darkest part of the problem ; the flesh warreth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh so that they cannot do the things that they would. There is no peace in their souls until they find peace in God ; and they find peace in God by appealing from the world to Him. Where the Once-Born are conscious of particular faults, these are conscious of ingrained guilt.

James argues that since sin and sorrow are undoubtedly as real as anything else, a religion which feels their pressure must be superior to one which is untroubled by them. " The completest religions," he says, " would there-

fore seem to be those in which the pessimistic elements are best developed.”¹ And so far we are bound to agree. But the whole tendency of this book, as also of the dominant theological thought of our time, has been to encourage a practical application of this doctrine in what I believe to be a fundamentally mistaken manner.

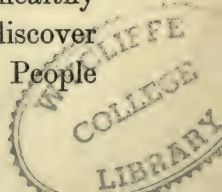
The world has grown weary of religious formalism ; and this has led to a renewed emphasis on the specific religious experience and especially a new attention to the experience of the mystics. All of this was in the highest degree desirable ; in the Anglican communion at least there has long been a tendency to leave religious experience altogether out of sight ; had it been otherwise, it would not have been possible for an acute observer, such as Matthew Arnold undoubtedly was, to speak of religion as “morality touched with emotion.” Of course it is right to insist that the very life of religion is an intercourse with God, to which our intercourse with our friends offers the best analogy in our experience. Of course it is right

¹ *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 165.

to insist that correctness of conduct and regular Church attendance can never be more than the *παιδαγωγός* leading us to Christ. But if we have learnt that justification can never be by the works of the law, as St. Paul instructs the Galatians and the Romans, perhaps we need all the more to be reminded that neither does it consist in visions and ecstasies and raptures, as he instructs the Corinthians.

There are two dangers to which I would call attention. The first is that which has often been pointed out—the danger of “subjectivity.” The most illuminating expression of this danger which I remember was given once in my hearing by Bishop Palmer of Bombay: “The real meaning of the creed is expressed by the emphasis ‘I believe in GOD’; but under the influence of Ritschlianism men are tending to say: ‘*I* believe in God.’”

But the other is more subtle and equally great; it shows itself in a tendency to minimise the importance of conduct, and sometimes in a wholly unnatural and unhealthy distress of mind in those who cannot discover in themselves the religious symptoms. People



may try to force themselves into a condition of which the vehement language of St. Paul can be an appropriate expression. They wish to qualify as Twice-Born souls. But it is not good for men to attend in this way to their own spiritual state. The conviction of the average healthy man that saintliness is rather morbid and closely akin to priggishness has a very large foundation of truth. Let a man keep alive his intercourse with God, and then let him leave in God's hands the spiritual experience that is to be his.

For indeed the two main types are not exactly as James describes them ; the two main types are those who turn in upon themselves as they seek for God, and those who, looking out into the world and its work, seek Him there. The former are the mystics *par excellence* : no man can have any religion without having something of the mystical experience—the immediate personal intercourse with God ; but for the mystic this is an all-absorbing experience. He may have doubts and perplexities ; he may even shrink from his knowledge and flee from the Hound of Heaven

“Adown Titanic glooms of chasméd fears,
From those strong feet that followed, followed after.”

But he knows that he cannot escape, for

“with unhurrying chase
And unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
‘All things betray thee, who betrayest Me?’”

The darkness of doubt and shrinking is real for
such a man, but it is not the ultimate thing,
for at the last he asks

“Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand outstretched caressingly?”

The Twice-Born man has after all a basis of
firm conviction below all his troubles. Lying
beneath his doubt, his anguish, his self-
diremption, is an unshakable assurance, and
we feel that his doubt has never probed the
uttermost depths. He may feel torn and
bound: “O wretched man that I am, who
shall deliver me from the body of this death?”
but at the end he looks back over his life and
forward to his future destiny with calm assur-
ance: “I have fought the good fight; I have

kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness.”

And there are others—and no doubt St. Paul belongs to this class quite as much as to the former—there are others who look outwards as they seek for God ; they try to keep their consciences alert and then do their duty as they see it. They may seem easy-going, but they are vigorous and efficient. Where they come, men seem to be brighter and more vivacious. They scatter health around them, both physical and spiritual, but it may be that as they thus cheerfully pursue their way, piping that men may dance, the evil in the world thwarts their plans. They have looked upon the world with loving eyes, but the world grows colder to them and more cruel. Was it only their own love that made the world seem lovable ? Has the whole thing been a mistake ? They have tried to include it all in their vision of good.

Oh, Love ! No, Love. All the noise below, Love ;

Groanings all and moanings—none of life I lose ;

All of life's a cry just of weariness and woe, Love,

“ Hear at least, thou happy one.” How can I, Love,
but choose ?

Only when I do hear, sudden circle round me,
 (Much as when the moon's might frees a space
 from cloud),
 Iridescent splendours; gloom—would else confound
 me—
 Barrièred off and banished far; bright-edged the
 blackest shroud.

* * * *

Then the cloud-rift broadens, spanning earth that's
 under,
 Wide our world displays its worth, man's strife and
 strife's success
 All the good and beauty, wonder crowning wonder,
 Till my heart and soul applaud perfection, nothing
 less.

Only—at heart's utmost joy and triumph—terror
 Sudden turns the blood to ice; a chill wind
 disencharms
 All the late enchantment. What if all be error?
 If the halo, irised round my head be, Love, thine
 arms?

“What if all be error?” Earlier perhaps
 they would have been classed as Once-Born
 souls, comparatively shallow. But it is such
 natures that are capable of the deepest ex-
 perience of all. “What if all be error?”
 “Why hast thou forsaken Me?” And we
 know that the doubt and anguish here have
 probed the uttermost depths.

The body has many members, and not all have the same office. We do not need all of us to cultivate a specific sense of sin, or of acceptance, or of mystical incorporation into Christ. Let a man keep alive his intercourse with God through Christ Jesus and then leave his spiritual life to take what course the Spirit of God shall choose.

He may have to face doubts and struggle with the mind of the flesh ; if so he will be sharing the experience of St. Paul ; and why should he aim at more ?

He may live a smoothly-moving life sustained by quiet faith, welcome at feasts, the friend of children and of sinners ; if so, he will in his degree resemble Jesus of Nazareth in the early days of the Galilean ministry ; and why should he aim at more ?

He may begin thus, and find the peace broken, the joy extinguished, the very work of God a failure and a wreck, so that he knows not what he should live for or even die for ; If so, he shares in his degree the experience of Calvary, and what can he aim at more ? For this is the innermost heart of God, the anguish of His baffled love.

Here then is the conclusion of the matter. Keep your intercourse with God through Jesus Christ constant and, if it may be so, affectionate ; then follow duty as in obedience to Him ; and the vision of God will come, as it shall please Him to reveal Himself in us.

III

THEOLOGY THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION

OXFORD. *January 18, 1914.*

Rev. ii. 7.—"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

IF we believe that the course of the world is governed by the Providence of God, we shall expect to find in every new epoch fresh opportunities for the victory of faith. In our own day there are two distinct spheres where our faith is challenged, and at first sight it seems that to accept both challenges at once is almost impossible. The first challenge comes from the whole condition of the world in our time ; for it is all in process of remaking. The social order of Europe and America is undergoing transformation ; the whole life in the

East is breaking into new energy ; European influence and the advance of Mohammedanism are co-operating to bring to an end the long slumber of Africa and to awaken none knows what. There is such a chance as perhaps there never was before of leavening the whole lump of the world with the leaven of faith.

Yet in that very moment of opportunity we seem to be paralysed. For the faith as we have received it is itself called in question by the advance of knowledge and the expansion of thought. Here too, we must believe, there is a great opportunity. We must claim the right to show how faith in Jesus Christ is the one principle that can give unity to all the chaos of knowledge which has lately been tossed into the human mind. But in doing that we shall find ourselves restating what we had received and, possibly at least, modifying the very substance of our belief. And the Church of England, which gives permission to its representatives to make experiments and initiate adventures for the conquest of thought in the name of Christ, is told, as a result, by one of its most devoted missionary leaders " that at the present time,

having regard to her exceedingly chaotic system of Truth, she is entirely unfit to send missionaries to heathen or Muhammedan lands.”¹

It looks at first as if some devil were at work, sapping the strength of the Church in the day of its opportunity. I shall suggest later on another interpretation of the matter; but first I would draw your attention to the fact that we have in the Church of England, and are undoubtedly exposed to serious dangers through having “an exceedingly chaotic system of Truth.” It is even more accurate, perhaps, to say, as has been lately said, that whereas the Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Rome have erred in matters concerning the faith, “the point about the Church of Canterbury is that it has never pretended to be right.”² To that I would only add that it has been right precisely in refusing to make any such pretension. Let us admit that our Reformation settlement rests not on theological conviction but on compromise dictated by the exigencies of a particular moment in national

¹ *Ecclesia Anglicana*, p. 1.

² R. A. Knox, *Naboth's Vineyard*, p. 16.

history. Still, man's blindness is God's opportunity, and it is possible that, in that mere working compromise, God fashioned for Himself a tool that He would use in a time which is upon us now, but of which no human being then dreamt.

The most fundamental question now requiring discussion is that of the nature of theology itself. Is it a Deposit, miraculously placed in the world, which the Church has only to hand on from generation to generation? or is the Deposit of Faith just the vitalising energy of righteousness—of love towards God and man—which came into the world in and through Jesus Christ, theology being the progressive attempt to understand this vitalising energy? If this latter is the truth, as I firmly believe, then there is a peculiar service which, in the Providence of God, can be rendered by a Church which maintains the means of grace as they were known in the Undivided Church, which still ministers the same vitalising energy through the same ministry of Word and Sacrament, but does not claim to possess a final and unalterable intellectual apprehension, in which all future ages are to acquiesce. No doubt

the Church has never deliberately adopted such a position ; it drifted into it ; or was it led into it by the Holy Spirit to meet the needs of such a time as this ?

There are two perfectly distinct ways of regarding theology. The one presents it as a process of Deduction from unquestioned principles. To those who accept those principles the conclusions are certain ; and there are some who seem to hold that they could not preach on any other basis than this. " If I could not preach the Christian faith in its fulness on a basis of absolute *a priori* certainty I would give up preaching it altogether." But the certainty is purely subjective. In the thirteenth century, when no one in Europe (speaking broadly) questioned the initial principles, this was probably the most effective method of bringing the Church's doctrines before men's minds ; but it was never valid proof, for to question those principles made the whole fabric insecure. And those principles are widely questioned now. Whether we accept them or not seems (as far as I can understand one representative of this school) to be a matter of what psychologists call

temperament, while Christianity calls it faith.¹ We are to trust orthodox tradition to determine what we are to believe and common sense to determine what is orthodox tradition.²

I cannot here refrain from quoting my father's saying, that Newman's great mistake lay in looking first for the true Church and then believing what is taught, instead of looking first for the truth and then serving that Church which taught it most fully.

The deductive method is undoubtedly that of the Schoolmen. But certain reservations must be added. In the first place, as I have said, the initial postulates were then universally granted; so if the deductive reasoning was without flaw, doubt could not find an entrance. The certainty therefore had an appearance of objectivity which it has entirely lost owing to the fact that the believer now-a-days perpetually meets with people who do not admit his starting-point. He may be perfectly assured of this starting-point himself,

¹ R. A. Knox, *Some Loose Stones*, pp. 27, 28 (The words here occur in another context, but the whole point of view is clear).

² *Ibid.*, p. 216.

but that assurance is not evidence, it is merely a fact of his personal experience. And so this theological method turns out to rest in the last resort upon a particular type of "religious experience," though it is disposed to treat the appeal to religious experience with contempt.¹ And the second reservation is this: in making theology deductive the Schoolmen were conforming to the ideal which all science set before itself at that time. They were simply making theology as scientific as they could. The Deductive method was everywhere supposed to be the one method of reaching certainty. The intellectual circumstances of the period made it possible to forget the fact that pure Deduction never has a right to its starting-point.

"But," it will be urged, "at any rate Induction never has any right to its conclusion." And that is true if we are thinking of Induction pure and simple. But both Induction and Deduction in their pure forms are products of analysis, which may be useful in debate, but never represent the reality of living thought. All actual thinking proceeds in

¹ cf. R. A. Knox, *Some Loose Stones*, pp. 200, 215.

circles or pendulum-swings. We approach a group of facts ; they suggest a theory ; in the light of the theory we get a fuller grasp of the facts ; this fuller grasp suggests modifications of the theory ; and so we proceed until we reach a systematic apprehension of the facts where each fits into its place. In the end we have not one universal and unquestioned proposition with other propositions deductively established from it, but a whole system—a concrete universal—in which each element is guaranteed by all the rest, and all together constitute the whole which determines each—as in a democracy the citizens actually constitute the sovereign which they obey. So Edward Caird used to tell us—“ There is no harm in arguing in a circle if the circle is large enough.” It was once a poser to say—If the elephant stands on the tortoise, on what does the tortoise stand ? But the Law of Gravitation says—If the elephant stands on the tortoise, the tortoise stands on the elephant.

So, for example, I am content to argue in this way. My upbringing has predisposed me to believe in the promises of Christ ; Christ promised to His disciples the guidance of

His Spirit ; the Church, as the fellowship of His disciples, will therefore probably be right —(not “ certainly,” because the treasure is in earthen vessels) ; I inquire independently into its decisions, and find that whenever I reach a conclusion at all, it is that the Church was right in relation to the problem before it at the time ; this confirms my belief that the Church is the Spirit-bearing Body, and that, in turn, corroborates the influence which trained me to put trust in Christ.

“ But this,” I shall be told, “ gives away the case ; for it admits that the whole process starts with a predisposition implanted by early training ; and if we track the history back we come to the days of unquestioning acceptance of the whole Catholic doctrine as such. This process of sifting may be gratifying to the individual who indulges in it, but it imperils the vital energy, which all are agreed is the greater matter. Thomas Arnold sat loose to Catholic tradition though he retained the fire of personal devotion ; but Matthew Arnold has little of that fire to show. The sons of men who contributed to *Essays and Reviews* and to *Lux Mundi* are found as

colleagues in *Foundations* ; in what will their sons collaborate ? There is only one way of safety ; it is to retain the whole—kernel and husk together ; for the kernel will perish if exposed without protection to the storm-blasts of criticism.”

But there is a parable on the other side also : a man once bought a basket of fruit, but he came to the conclusion that the basket was not good for food, so he threw it away with the fruit inside it, and thus went hungry. Another man found the basket, and because the fruit was good he devoured basket and fruit together ; and thus had indigestion. There is no “ safety ” in merely continuing to hand down a tradition. That, like so many courses recommended in the name of safety, is the deliberate choice of one particular disaster. No doubt this disaster is less complete than that which may overtake an unwise criticism ; but the risk of the greater disaster is avoided at the cost of making the greatest achievement impossible.

Some people, indeed, speak as if the Creeds were in the nature of the case unalterable, as if they were objects of faith themselves. But the

object of faith is God as it has pleased Him to reveal Himself to man. Those who have tried to live as disciples of Jesus Christ assure us that in Him they have found God even as He told them, so that trust in Him becomes part—the decisive part—of their faith. This experience of trust and its verification in consequent experience is formulated in the Creeds, as certain properties of matter are formulated in the Law of Gravitation. And it is possible, though most improbable, that further knowledge may lead to modification in either case. But if that Law requires alteration, the physical facts on which it rests will not thereby be altered ; if the Creeds require alteration, the facts which they attempt to formulate will still remain and the new formulation will have to take account of them. There is no lack of faith in such a view ; rather it rests on the faith that as God the Holy Spirit guided the Church in the past, so He will not fail to guide us now and always.

“ But is there, then, no finality ? ” No, there is not. How should there be finality in the finite’s apprehension of the Infinite ? The very demand for such finality or for

any absolute authority, whether in Church or Bible, superseding the individual conscience, is not far from the essential sin of Pharisaism. Our faith is a continuous adventure, and leads perpetually to new discoveries. Assurance becomes greater with every problem that the Church's doctrine solves and every soul that through it finds rest in God. But there is no finality; and yet there is authority, even Divine authority. We need to learn the great lesson of St. Paul's life, the truth implied in his whole treatment of the Jewish Law; that law was divinely instituted, yet its validity was only for a time. Even what God appoints may be changed as new stages are reached in the accomplishment of the Divine purpose. What the doctrinal basis of Church membership should be, the Church must at any given time decide; and though it is not probable that any change will be required, we must always recognise the possibility that change may be required.

"But still," it is urged at last, "you cannot rely on reason alone. Your own beliefs are the product of reason and faith altogether, only you choose for yourself just how much 'faith'

you will put into the compound.”¹ This objection, however, rests entirely on that sharp antithesis of Deduction and Induction which has already been criticised. Our behaviour here should be exactly analogous with that of all sensible people in the realms of Art and Morals. Let us consider the latter, as being the more universally familiar subject. We are brought up under the influence of certain moral ideals and conventions ; these mould our own moral tastes and perceptions ; but as we grow up we criticise those ideals and conventions in the light of their own underlying principle so far as we are able to apprehend this—and so we are able to hand down to our successors a fuller and truer conception of moral duty than we received from our predecessors ; and they in turn will improve on what we pass on to them. We can by no means exhaust our moral duty merely by “keeping true to ideals which were there all along.”² We have to try to find the principle of which each ideal is a consequence, or the system in which it is an element, and

¹ Cf. *Ecclesia Anglicana*, pp. 12–14.

² R. A. Knox, *Some Loose Stones*, p. 38.

correct each ideal in the light of our whole conception of Duty. Or if we believe, as I believe, that the fundamental moral law is already known—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"—that still requires constant verification and our understanding of it requires constant amplification.

The Catholic theology is, no doubt, a coherent system ; it is a genuine concrete universal ; it unifies just those facts with which it set out to deal. But since its formulation other facts have been brought within men's knowledge, and the question arises whether this system must be modified to enable it to form a part in man's whole knowledge of God's Universe, or whether it can take its place there as it stands. For myself I believe that the modifications will be so slight as to be negligible, and that the old formulæ, and in particular the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds, will stand unchanged. But the question has been asked, and only thorough scientific inquiry can answer it.

This does not mean that we are to dispense with all authority, or to seek for God through the study only of those facts which are the

subject-matter of the natural sciences. We were born children of Christian parents ; we were received into the fellowship of the Church at Baptism. That is our starting-point : and it is the starting-point of most Christian people. Some few there are whom God calls directly by inward revelation ; and many more who are drawn to the Gospel by the personality of some of Christ's disciples. Thus we acquire our predisposition to believe—from the authority of those whom we love or of those whom we revere or of the inward voice of God. They must be very few who first believe through submission to the authority of the Church as such. It is from the same sources that we derive our habits of Bible-reading, prayer, and communion. And there many people stop, and no doubt rightly stop ; they have found power by which to live. But if a man feels beyond this the need to understand, or the call to help others who feel that need, he will proceed somewhat as follows. He will try first to understand as fully as he may the formulation of the faith as it has been worked out in previous generations. He will criticise this in the light of the widest

experience of which he can make himself master—whether it be his own or that of others or that of the whole society of believers as represented in the corporate decisions of the Church ; he will try to make by means of it a coherent view of life and of the world, which shall include so far as possible all the knowledge of things spiritual and physical which has so far been allowed to men. As he proceeds, some parts of the whole doctrine of the Church will seem to be more and more indubitably true. As he applies the central beliefs—and particularly the beliefs that in Christ we see the Father—to the problems of life, he finds those problems simplified and often solved. And so, *because he is convinced of a part, and has seen that the whole is all of one piece*, he will be ready, if the call come, to be ordained as a minister of the Church which upholds the Catholic doctrine as a whole. He will still be ready for modification here and there ; still more will he be not only ready but eager to win the same appreciation of the rest of the Creed as he has already won of this article and that ; but, *unless some new fact of experience leads him to remould his*

whole world of thought, he knows that he is right to trust and to preach the Church's creed. And he has reached that knowledge by the scientific method of experiment and thought. He makes no claim to reach his conclusion by reason without data ; the data are no doubt given him as a rule by his Christian environment. But the human mind does not itself create the facts which it studies in physics and chemistry, and there is no desertion of reason for faith when moral and spiritual perceptions are taken as the data instead of perceptions of the bodily senses ?

Nor is this method of critical conservatism a new one. It is as old as the New Testament itself. For it seems clear that the author of the Fourth Gospel—(whom I believe to be St. John, the beloved disciple)—deliberately corrected St. Mark with reference to certain dates. And in doctrine, if by that is meant systematic expression, St. Anselm undoubtedly made a great advance upon all previously accepted notions concerning the Atonement, and Dr. Moberly, in my judgment, represents as great an advance upon St. Anselm. And as the individual Christian or the whole Body of

the Church thus works out man's understanding of the truth of God, while old formularies will be retained as standards of belief wherever possible, for the sake of the associations which gather round them, and the latitude of interpretation which their old-world phraseology encourages, there will be all the while perpetual retranslation of the doctrines into the language of advancing knowledge. We shall know that our phrases cannot be adequate, but we shall hope that they may be more adequate than phrases belonging to an even more rudimentary stage of human knowledge ; and we shall expect to find them bringing home the truths enshrined in them with greater force and effect.

But of course the reality, which the Church progressively apprehends, is now as it was in the beginning and as it ever shall be :—

It fortifies my soul to know
 That though I perish, Truth is so ;
 That howsoe'er I stray or range,
 Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change :
 I steadier step when I recall,
 That if I slip, Thou dost not fall.

What then is this one Reality? and how is it made known to men? and what is the faith which persists unchanging through altering expressions of belief?

“In Him was life”—not mere aliveness but vital energy—“and the life was the light of men.”

“Faith is confidence in what is hoped for, a testing of things not seen.”

Christ answered no speculative questions, but He gave men power to live as He lived—the power or right to become sons of God—if they put their trust in Him. And in response we make an act, not of intellectual submission, but of self-devotion and dedication of purpose, being confident that what we hope is true (though we have no *a priori* certainty) and testing the unseen forces alike in thought and action. This faith is one in all the ages, though in its outward form at various times it is as different as the oak is different from the acorn which is its earliest self. This vital energy given by God and received by man in the Person of Him Who is both God and Man—this is the eternal in the midst of time. And the

Church is the fellowship of all who thus devote themselves or earnestly try to do so. It is one with a unity that no schism can break ; our divisions are indeed unhappy and a sad source of weakness, but through them all the Church remains one. However multiform its organisation, however various in degree of adequacy its interpretation of the one Lord, still in its allegiance to the historic Jesus Christ as God and Man it is one with a unity not made by man but by Christ Himself when in utter loneliness He bore the Cross for all mankind.

Now the point of view which I am suggesting seems to me full of hope for the Church's missionary work. I have no authority to speak on such a theme, but I am sure that if I were called to be a Missionary, I should desire abundant liberty of re-translating the experience formulated in the Catholic tradition into language more intelligible to the children of another civilisation, and I should hope to learn from my converts' way of responding to the revelation of God in Christ so much new truth as might require some change in my own formulation of belief. I should be glad to say to a nascent native Church—while

myself maintaining the truth as I had received and tested it—" ' Read of, ponder on, pray to the Lord Jesus Christ,'¹ and receive His Sacramental Presence through the means He has appointed, and as you do this all else will become plain to you according to your needs and circumstances."

And we in the Church of England have a peculiar responsibility. Whatever the historical explanation of the fact may be, fact it is that we unite in one ecclesiastical organisation representatives of almost all possible types of Christianity. Lately we have all been learning to appreciate one another in new ways, and consequently have been learning much from each other—as also from those outside our own body. Here is an opportunity, such as is not to be found elsewhere in the world, of bringing into being that Evangelical Catholicism which is the only possible basis for a reunited Church. We should give heed to the Bishop of Oxford's warning, and be careful (if truth permit) never to state our own view in such a way as to make others feel that fellow-

¹ Archbishop Temple. *The Relation between Religion and Science*—closing words.

ship with us is impossible. We must endure the lack of immediate force which comes from the lack of definiteness in our doctrinal position. For there seems to be one work to which we are peculiarly called—the work of mediation between different groups of Christ's disciples, and of generating the new synthesis upon which all may at last combine.

But while we seek patience for our time of waiting, and while we strive to speak the truth in unfeigned love, let us pray the more earnestly for that full outward unity of the Church which is the indispensable condition of its conquest of the world. While we contradict one another in the name of Christ the world is either bewildered or indifferent. The testimony of a united Church would be almost irresistible. But union must not be reached either through compromise or through retrogressive movement to the position in which we were united long ago. I even believe that our divisions have been permitted precisely in order that, in the stir of thought to which they give occasion, we may find at last a fuller truth than was known to the primitive or to the mediæval Church, and

that re-united on that higher level we may win a yet more glorious victory for Christ.

And as we pray for that full unity in trust and action, let us be guided by the most sacred words in all the world—the prayer which was Christ's own prelude to His redemptive act of sacrifice, as that prayer lingered in the memory and imagination of His dearest friend :—

“ I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one as we are As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word ; that they all may be one ; as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us : that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.”

IV

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

Manchester Cathedral. *July 5, 1914 (morning).*

S. John, iii. 9, 10.—“Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not these things?”

NICODEMUS has come secretly to our Lord and introduced himself with compliments: “We know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him.” He occupied an important position in the Jewish Church; his influence with the authorities would be of the greatest possible help to the new movement, and he could help more if he did not declare himself, for if once he did that he would have taken sides and so lost his influence with opponents and authorities alike. Surely the

Leader of the new movement will welcome him and urge him to continue his timely interest.

No, not a bit of it ; Nicodemus is told that unless he is ready to break with all his traditions, he will never have a glimpse of what the new movement is aiming at. " Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Nicodemus says that such a fresh start in the middle of an established career is as utterly impossible as a literal physical re-birth ; " How can a man be born when he is old ? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born ? " But the answer is that the new birth is perfectly open to him. John the Baptist had made public Baptism in the Jordan the outward sign of sin confessed, of repentance, and of expectation of the Kingdom of God ; and our Lord's disciples, several of whom had formerly been disciples of the Baptist, were administering the same rite. Nicodemus could make public confession of his belief that the new teaching was from God by submitting to Baptism ; he could be " born of water." That, however, would not be enough ; the change which he

thought impossible would be wrought in him by the Spirit of God if he would submit to its influence. That Spirit moves as it wills ; its origin and goal are unknown ; it cannot be led along the channels of organised religious observances ; it is like the wind which blows none knows whence or whither, but whose sound we hear and whose breath we may feel if we will but go out of doors. “ Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of flesh is flesh ; that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born anew. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth ; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.” But for Nicodemus that makes matters worse ; he knew the means of Grace ; the Law of Moses was divinely instituted ; what is meant by this uncontrollable force which moves at its own direction in the world ? “ Nicodemus answered and said unto Him, ‘ How can these things be ? ’ ” And the Lord turns to him in amazement. “ Art thou the teacher of Israel, and under-

standest not these things ? Verily, verily I say unto thee, we speak that we do know and bear witness of that we have seen." For the Lord and His disciples this power of the Spirit was a fact of familiar experience, and He asks in wonder how any man who professes to teach religion can be ignorant of it. For the Lord and His disciples religion was first and foremost, not doctrine, whether traditional or rationalist, and not ceremonial ; it was first and foremost a personal experience.

The great mark of most of the religious thought of our own day is its constant appeal to religious experience. But that term is itself very largely misunderstood, because in the great mystical saints, who are the clearest examples of that experience, it reaches a pitch of development and of detachment from other concerns, which makes it seem something with which the ordinary man, even the ordinary devout man, has no personal acquaintance. As with the Holy Grail, the vision is granted to Galahad and one or two beside, but the quest is only for the few.

Now of course it is true that the great mystic has a particular joy which no other has

in like degree ; but so has the great philosopher, and the great artist and the great musician and the great poet. And each of these has a contribution to make which no one else can make to the whole welfare of mankind, to the building of the body of the Christ. But we enter into their peculiar joy in our own degree. And while we admire these men for their great gifts and powers, we do not regard the gifts themselves as meritorious ; moral merit is to be found in the study which develops the gift or in the use that is made of it, but not in the gift itself. Just so it is with religious experience in that vivid form which is rightly called mystical. Some people are blessed with the faculty for such experience ; and while we admire the gift, we find no moral excellence in it. That is to be found in the discipline that cultivates it and the service of God and man that springs from it.

In the Church of Corinth to which St. Paul wrote his letters there were people who prided themselves on their religious experience ; they had spiritual gifts ; they could prophesy, and work miracles of healing ; they could fall into ecstasy in which they uttered unintellig-

ible sounds which others, under the influence of the same emotion, could interpret. It appears that they had asked St. Paul which of these were the more excellent gifts, and they were themselves inclined to rank highest those that seemed most unusual. And St. Paul answers their question by asking what gifts are of most service to the community ; these are the most desirable. But in the middle of the argument he impatiently breaks off and changes his whole style as he insists that all such gifts are mere instruments, good or bad according to the use made of them, and having nothing specifically Christian about them. " Desire earnestly the greater gifts ; and a still more excellent way show I unto you. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal." The brass and the cymbal are not mere instruments of noise, they are the accompaniment of the revels of Dionysus. You may have all the spiritual gifts there are, says St. Paul, but if you have not love or charity, you are no more a worshipper of Christ than of Dionysus. St. John deals with any self-centred religious

experience with even greater trenchancy : “ If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.” There is then no merit and no peculiar Christianity in mystical experience as such ; that experience is a gift, like a capacity for poetry or music, and its moral value depends on the use that is made of it.

And yet the poet and the musician keep alive in us something that we value greatly and should lose without them. They reveal to us a beauty in the world which is really there, but which apart from them we should have passed by ; their keener faculties catch the fleeting glory, and fix it so that our duller powers may apprehend it and appreciate it. And so we enter into their experience. So too the mystic and the saint keep alive a side of human nature which in ordinary men is often near to perishing. They hear the voice of the wind of the spirit as it blows none knows whence or whither, and they interpret what they hear into the language of our duller faculties, so that through them our spiritual instincts, sluggish perhaps by nature and almost paralysed by the duties or

the pleasures of life, are kept alive and nurtured and in our degree we make their experience our own. We may never have had visions or trances, nor any thrill of conversion or assurance of acceptance ; but we have said prayers when we knew that we were heard ; we have asked for guidance and received it ; we have made surrenders of our wills to find that in that act we most fulfilled them.

But such a catalogue of isolated events can never exhaust or explain what we mean by our religious experience. These are merely the outstanding moments in a life which tries to see the world and act in it as though with the eyes and will of God. This attempt, half-hearted as it usually is, yet brings with it, not only in moments of exaltation, but in the gradual crystallisation of conviction, an assurance of its own essential rightness which is hard to communicate or to justify, precisely because it is built up of numberless occurrences, some unnoticed and almost all of them unremembered. To ask a religious man why he believes in God is like asking a happy man why he enjoys life. No verbal answer can be given. But if we live in that

man's fellowship or in the fellowship of a society of such men, which is what the Church ought to be, we may catch the secret by sympathy.

Yet this trust, whose foundation is vague just because it is so widely laid, is of the same stuff as the vivid intuitions of the saints, and from them we shall learn its nature more clearly than from ourselves.

Every branch of man's activity leads him up to God ; and yet not all of these together make up religion without something more besides. The intellect at its furthest flight is found pronouncing that the whole universe is one, and one by virtue of the intellectual coherence of the whole ; but it can only guess at the omniscient Mind which alone could grasp that coherence. Art, concentrating contemplation upon its creations, claims therein to offer satisfaction to the soul ; but it can only meet its own claim in so far as it presents what is adorable, when the contemplation passes into worship. Duty ends in the command that we should love our neighbours as ourselves, a command that we cannot even set out to obey unless the voice of Duty is for us the voice of the Father

of all men who loves all His children, and our neighbour is seen in the light of our Father's purpose for him. Knowledge, Art, Duty—all are waiting for something which shall perfect each and bind them each to other. But they only shew the need for God ; they do not shew that God exists to meet the need.

Men seek God by the way of Knowledge ; but at the end of the road they have only formed a conception of Him ; they have not met with Him. Men seek God by the way of Beauty ; but at the end they have not found Him ; they have only formed a yearning which no beauty on earth can satisfy. Men seek God by the way of Conduct ; but they only find a Law from which they infer a Lawgiver ; God is still hidden. If we begin without God and try to find our way to Him, we shall at best reach a vague Pantheism, which will only satisfy if we read into it a personal intercourse for which in strict logic it has no room. That is indeed what many people do ; having some real religious experience but not recognising it for what it is, they suppose that they have begun without God and have also

ended to their full satisfaction without God, when as a matter of fact they have been with Him all along.

But when the religious experience is recognised for what it is, whether it come in the form of visions and intuitions, or in the form of a gradually crystallised conviction or habit of men towards life, it is recognised as something overmastering. Art sometimes appears so to the artist ; but to the religious man invariably his religion becomes, not something which he uses, but something which uses him. And therein it becomes terrifying. We find ourselves confronted with a God, or it may be fleeing from a God, who demands every moment of our time, every tittle of our energy. We do not yet trust Him to give us all we need, and fear to make our submission absolute :

“ For though I knew His love who followéd,
Yet was I sore adread
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.”

We know His love ; we recognise His claim. Yet we fear He would break us in the using, and we still flee on “ from those strong feet that follow, follow after ” :

“ Ah ! must—

Designer infinite !—

Ah ! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn
with it ? ”

But at last we find—so all the Saints assure us, though for ourselves we have not found it yet—that all, whose loss we feared, is not lost but found when we find Him, and can only be found there. Knowledge and Beauty and Goodness will all at last be his who starts with God ;

“ All which thy child’s mistake

Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home :

Rise, clasp My hand and come.”

Now no man is entirely without such intercourse with God ; for no man is utterly without love. “ God is love ; he that loveth his brother abideth in God ”—and that whether he knows it or not. This is the centre of the Christian revelation. “ He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father ” : “ God is love.” And herein for the first time Heaven, which is the Presence, or Fellowship, of God, becomes accessible to all men. Not only spiritual athletes, not only heroes of moral rectitude, but weak and futile men who have any love in their hearts are

therein already experiencing in some measure that intercourse with God, whose full measure is the goal of man's existence. How then can we foster this germ of the Life Divine which is in all of us, until we recognise and yield to its imperious claims so that it shall become the dominating force of our existence? There is no one way. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." But we know from its sound where its breath may be felt. Let us place ourselves there and open the lungs of our soul to receive it. We hear the passing of the wind of the Spirit in all those aspirations which are the source of the unrest of our day; in the claims for a recognition of real personality in those who have often been regarded as only "hands" of their employers; in the demand for more widely diffused education so that all the sons of civilisation may enter upon their rightful inheritance in the realms of Literature, History, Science, and Art; in the drawing together of religious bodies under the desire for that unity among His disciples for which Christ prayed before the Passion. In these and many another movement of our time we hear the movement of the Spirit. Let us be careful not

to stand aside while it passes by, but to be in the full rush and tumult of its onward sweep. But if we submit to the Spirit's impetus only in active work, we shall forget that He is the Spirit of God and become deaf to much that He would teach us ; just as if we listen only in prayer and meditation we shall forget that He is the Spirit of Love going forth to all men, and so too become deaf to much that He would teach us. But we must pray for the spirit of devotion in our work, and work for the realisation of the petitions in our prayers. That alone is the way of saintliness ; one man can only realise a little of the whole truth of God, and only the whole and completed Church Catholic can grasp it in its entirety ; but it is the life so lived which has in it that religious experience, by which in the end all doctrines must be tested, and from which in the end the solution of every problem comes.

SCHOOL SERMONS

V

MICHAELMAS

September 29, 1912.

Rev. xii. 7, 8.—"And there was war in heaven : Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon ; and the dragon warred and his angels ; and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven."

ONE of the things about the period we live in, which will most surprise future generations, is the contraction of our religious outlook as compared with the expansion of our knowledge. In the last hundred years knowledge has developed at an almost giddy pace. Its scope includes stretches of time and space which the imagination can make no attempt to grasp. One department after another has been triumphantly occupied by advancing

science ; and we are perpetually being promised, as we were promised again this summer, that science will soon achieve, or at least account for, the production of life itself. And all of this should have resulted in a quickening and enlarging of our religious life ; for all the growth of science is the further unfolding of the work of God. And yet in our religion we are more liable than former generations to shut our eyes to everything except the events of our own experience in this planet. Our fathers believed in spiritual beings who peopled the whole of space :—

“Thrones and Dominations
Stars upon their way ;
All the heavenly orders
In their great array.”

To them the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels revived the memory of a spiritual world in which they whole-heartedly believed. But for most of us it stands for nothing at all—except that various payments fall due at that time. We don't really believe in Angels ; and it is worth while to ask why that belief has died out, and what we have gained or lost by its decay.

One of the best features of the tendencies of modern religious life is the determination which we find on every side to emphasise only what can be tested or shown to have real spiritual value. We have our lives to live ; we have to shape our characters. There is enough here for all our strength and all our time. Why spend our energies in fancies about angels or any other beings who may or may not exist ? There is work to be done in the world, and we need our religious faith to support us in the doing of it ; but belief in angels, we think, can never help us, let alone the fact that we have no very good reason for believing in them.

That, or something like it, is our ordinary frame of mind ; and it is both healthy and honest ; but it is limited. After all, if we are to move the world we must have some point outside the world on which to rest our lever. A religion which belongs altogether to our life here will never change that life.

The New Testament gives no support to all the fantastic stories—some of them rather

pretty, some only grotesque—which most of us have learnt in childhood to associate with angels. But it always represents human life as being a single episode in the great purpose of God which extends far beyond it.

So you remember St. Paul speaks, “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now”; or again: “to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God.” And so it appeared also to the seer who wrote the book with which our Bible closes. He sees in successive visions the working of God’s purpose in the world, and each represents it as accomplished through a great struggle in which countless spiritual hosts are engaged; the struggle is not only of man with man, nor only of man with the devil. The heavenly powers are implicated. It is a universe which is in conflict, and in that conflict, the whole spiritual sphere, called in the Bible “heaven,” is convulsed. “There was war in heaven, Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels.”

This is a view of the matter far more in accordance with what we now know of the universe than is the terrestrial provincialism which we have allowed to become habitual with us. It is hardly to be believed that the interest and purpose of Almighty God is all concentrated on the little planet where we happen to live. And the experience of those who have lived in the most conscious dependence upon God has led them to the conviction that they are engaged in a strife which pervades the universe, and that alike the enemies who confront us and the powers on our side are more than human; "our wrestling," says St. Paul, "is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."

If all this is true it means for us two things. It should give us the confidence of knowing that we are members of a vast host all engaged with us in the same struggle; and it should quicken the sense of responsibility as we remember how great is the cause which may suffer through our cowardice or negligence:

“If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars ;
 It may be, in yon smoke concealed,
 Your comrades chase e’en now the fliers,
 And, but for you, possess the field.”

It may be that we are by our faults withholding victory from the hosts of God. And such in some degree St. Paul believed to be the case. “The earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God.”

So then, to join in the battle of God we put on the whole armour of God. But as we use the language of battle and strife let us pause to consider the manner of our fighting. For we shall not assist the victory of the hosts of God unless we come to the battle in the Spirit of God. We sing hymns—

“Onward, Christian soldiers,
 Marching as to war,”

or

“Fight the good fight with all thy might.”

And the spirit so expressed is right enough in its way. But never by defiance, or arrogance, or any haughty temper will victories be won for God. All the talk about fighting

evil and confidence of triumph carries us but a little way. The meaning of the whole world lies in this conflict. What is to be the manner of our fighting, and what the weapons of our warfare ?

Our Lord closed His ministry by marching upon Jerusalem ; and on the way He explained what was to end that march ; He was coming to take possession of the Holy City, and this is how He unfolds His plan. " Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be delivered . . . to mock and to scourge and to crucify." He makes no spirited assault upon the powers of evil ; He does not press with cheery confidence into the battle ; He shrinks from it. " My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." And in the moment when He was at grips with death and sin, He felt that God had forsaken Him and that His cause had failed.

Let us watch the Captain of the host in which we serve, and as we watch Him let us lay aside all self-reliance, all imagination that the victory is easily won or the cost soon paid. If we know what we are doing, we shall shrink from it ; and unless we know what we

are doing, we cannot hope for success. If Christianity has never frightened us, we have not found out what it is.

And when we have purged ourselves of self-confidence by gazing on the agony through which our Hero-Master struggled to the fulfilment of His Father's will, let us turn back to our own duties here and now. There will be no conceit in us now. We have seen the vastness of the struggle, and we shall not suppose that our puny lives can count for very much in it. But if there is no conceit, neither will there be levity ; for we shall dread lest the whole army of God should suffer through weakness at the point entrusted to us to hold. And there will be no pride or boasting in us now ; for we have watched the Agony and Cross of Christ, and we have understood why the Word of God which goes forth conquering and to conquer should first be set forth under the figure of a Lamb as it had been slain.

Do you think that all this has very little bearing on our life and duties here ? It is well at the beginning of a school-year to ask what we want our school to do and be. Some of you have only just now become members of it ;

but from the very first your influence on it counts for something ; ask yourselves as you say your prayers what you would like the school to do and be, and pray God to help you in doing what you can to fulfil your wish. And some of you are just now entering upon leadership ; ask yourselves also that same question and pray the same prayer. Of course we want our school to be ranged among the hosts of God in His great battle ; but let us see the matter in its true setting ; we want not only to be armed against all forms of evil that may arise in the life of the school itself, but we want also that the school should send forth sons in successive generations filled with the spirit which shall range them on the side of God in all the problems of life and teach them to fight for God in the spirit and method of Christ.

If we are to take our full part in helping our school to rise to the height of our calling, we shall find our strength taxed to its uttermost limits and beyond them. It is well for us then, on this Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, to call to mind the great war of the spiritual powers in which we are taking a part,

so that we may make sure that, when the powers of evil prevail not and their place is no more found in heaven, they may not find in our school or our souls a place wherein to entrench themselves against the hosts of God, marring the perfection of His Kingdom, and that when through the whole creation the triumph song is raised by innumerable hosts of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, our note may not be wanting in that universal symphony of praise.

VI

THE POWER OF TRADITION

October 6, 1912

(After an address by Bishop Gore at Cuddesdon).

S. John, v. 44.—“How can ye believe, which receive glory one of another, but the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?”

THESE words were addressed to the inheritors of the greatest religious tradition at that time existing in the world. “How can we believe?”—we may imagine them replying: “Why, who does believe if we do not? We have upheld the great faith of God’s own revelation, and the Law which was given by the ministration of angels; we have suffered persecution for these things; our fathers bled and died for these things. We live for our religion; it governs all our conduct; who is this impudent upstart who says to us ‘How can ye believe?’?”

And their claim would be perfectly justified in a certain sense. The Jews of our Lord's time were not unworthy of their splendid history. They were faithful to what they believed to be required of them, enduring great inconvenience to perform it. Their history inspired them. Forty years later, in the great siege of Jerusalem, they were to show that the heroism of the Maccabees still lived.

Think what a history it was. We can trace it clearly enough from the time that Abraham came from Babylonia,—sent, as some think, to assume command over the vassal chiefs of Palestine. We see Jacob with his family drawn down into Egypt by the stories of the plenty there : we see them almost merged in Egypt, and the attempt to turn them into serfs ; we watch their escape and their growth into a nation under the leadership of Moses ; from a wandering pastoral tribe they become agriculturists with a fixed home ; they organise themselves for defence of that home under a monarch ; trade begins and the wealth of surrounding nations begins to pour in, in the days of Solomon ; development of trade leads to the growth of great cities, the amassing

of wealth in comparatively few hands and the subjection of most of the people. The expansion of the Assyrian Empire, and afterwards of its successor the Babylonian, swallowed Palestine, and its inhabitants were carried, in accordance with the general policy of the conquerors, to different parts of the empire whose loyalty was undoubted, and where, therefore, they would be powerless to give trouble.

That is the surface of the story in its first chapter. But below the surface was the growing consciousness of God. At first Jehovah is just the God of Israel and of Israel only; their enemies are His enemies. But He differed already from the gods of other nations in that He demanded of His worshippers righteousness of life. For this belief in the righteousness of God their great heroes had stood against kings and multitudes until they had given to the whole people their own faith. Seers had arisen who perceived that this God of righteousness must be the God not of Israel only but of all the earth, who brought the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir no less than Israel from Egypt.

This faith in the one righteous God of all the earth they had carried with them into their exile, and had upheld it there against the terrors and seduction of their surroundings. When Cyrus's policy of conciliating his new subjects by restoring them to their own lands led to Israel's return to its old home, difficulties and persecutions still beset them. The subtle influence of Greek culture began to spread and to threaten the vitality of the old faith. At last Antiochus Epiphanes tried by brutal force to extirpate the worship of Jehovah ; but the courage of the Maccabees frustrated the attempt, and in the struggle there emerged the noble sect of Pharisees to whom the Law of God was dearer than life itself. With splendid devotion they carried their cause to victory, and had for their reward the position of the recognised religious leaders in Israel. Not only from the New Testament do we learn this ; Josephus describes their proud position and speaks of the honour universally accorded them, especially by the devout women of Israel. A splendid inheritance was theirs ; and they were worthy of it ; when Titus laid siege to Jerusalem he found that the

spirit of the prophets and the heroes was not dead.

And these men have now been challenged to think out again the whole meaning of their faith—as though they were not masters of all its secrets! They are challenged—and that “by the merest layman”—to go back to the very beginning and regard the whole thing in a new light. And because they derived their inspiration from their tradition and not from the God who was its source, because they valued their great position in the eyes of men before their position in the sight of God, they were bound to refuse the challenge. “How can ye believe, which receive glory one of another, but the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not.” To have admitted that this Carpenter’s Son knew more about their own faith than they, its recognised masters, would have been to lower themselves in their own estimation and that of their admirers. They were members of a noble fellowship; and their membership brought them two gifts—“heroism and blindness of heart.”

Over and over again the same thing has hap-

pened in the history of the Christian Church. It almost happened to St. Francis of Assisi; the inheritors and trustees of the Catholic tradition almost drove him out. It quite happened in the case of Savonarola and of Luther. Our own branch of the Church was slow to hear the call of Wesley and again of Newman, though the main principles for which they stood were an integral part of the Church's life. And now again the Christian Church is challenged; men who own to little or no connection with it are bidding us think again how this or that in our contemporary life would have been regarded by the Lord whom we profess to serve. Are we going to refuse to listen, because we think that we must surely know the meaning of our own faith? Are we going to be haughty and consult our dignity and say that the Church could never condescend to learn the meaning of its own religion from Socialists and Labour Leaders? If so we are seeking honour of men, for it is only men, and not God, who will bring such a charge as this. The Bishops who voted in the House of Lords on the Bill for the abolition of the slave-trade all voted against it; but we know now that it was not

the Bishops who represented true Christianity in that matter. Men will still do and suffer great things for the Church. Membership of it still brings heroism ; and it still brings blindness of heart.

We are the inheritors and the custodians of a very special tradition. There are hardly any institutions where the force of public opinion is so strong as in our public schools. Here we live very largely by the opinions of our neighbours. Our ambition is to excel in those qualities which are generally admired. We "receive glory one of another" to an extent almost without parallel elsewhere in the world. And in a certain way this is good for us. It lifts us above mere self-seeking ; it strengthens our resistance to what is thought mean or disgraceful ; it nerves us to action or endurance beyond what we could otherwise have achieved. But there are faults in the public opinion of the schools ; it is bound to be so with any human institution. And if we take all our opinions from the society we live in, we shall tolerate what ought not to be tolerated, and may even come to admire what ought to be condemned. And the nett result of our school

life will be that our characters are strengthened and our moral vision blunted.

We have no need to leave out of sight the innumerable and inestimable benefits which our schools bestow upon us. Loyalty and gratitude are our duty and will become our joy. But just because the benefits are so great we are in danger of relying upon them too much. The school can only grow if its members are ready not only to receive what is good in its life but to resist what is bad and to correct what is faulty. If we simply let its influences play upon us, it will leave us, I hope, better than it found us; but we shall be merely accepting the general opinion of our companions and trying to be only what they admire; we shall receive glory one of another without seeking the glory that cometh from the only God.

And this is just what we do. That is how it is that our schools go on sending out into the world men of the same type—fine, honourable, trustworthy men indeed, but men with little understanding of the world they have to live in; sensible, but unintelligent. For the world is changing and makes new demands; new

ideas and new ideals are shaping it. And if we have learnt to rely only on the public opinion of our school for our own judgments of right and wrong, we shall become honourable indeed and trustworthy, but also futile and ineffective.

Patriotism is a great thing, either as love of school or love of country. But it is not the greatest thing, and must never usurp the place of what is greatest. I expect you know the close of Henry Newbolt's poem on Clifton Chapel and its allusion to the war memorial there :—

“ Qui procul hinc,” the legend's writ,
The frontier-grave is far away—
“ Qui ante diem periit,
Sed miles, sed pro patria.”

But another poet has written on another school war memorial ; and after commemorating the fine devotion to duty of those in whose honour it was erected, he concludes :—

But, oh ! lest glory stoop to pride,
May we remember, when we pray,
The noblest death was His who died
Nec miles, nec pro patria.

“ When we pray.” There is the solution of our

trouble. If our worship in this Chapel is genuine we shall be learning to seek the glory that cometh from the only God before all else in the world.

Our duty then is plain. Never allow public opinion to over-ride your own conscience. Try to find what the will of God is for you ; and then try to follow it. So we shall be able to derive strength or even heroism from our membership in the school and our inheritance of its great traditions without forfeiting the open vision of Right, and Truth, and God.

VII

SEPTUAGESIMA

January 19, 1913.

Ecclesiastes, i. 9.—“That which hath been is that which shall be ; and that which hath been done is that which shall be done : and there is no new thing under the sun.”

Rev. xxi. 5.—“ And he that sitteth on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.”

It was a stroke of genius when the author of the Book of Ecclesiastes put his sombre reflections into the mouth of the wise and wealthy Solomon. It was the habit of authors at that time to take the name of some hero of the past ; the aim of the author of this book is to show how worldly wisdom defeats itself and ends in wretchedness, unless it falls back on the wisdom that is not worldly but commences in the fear of God—“ Let us hear

the conclusion of the whole matter ; fear God, and keep His commandments ; for this is the whole of man ”—so he publishes his reflections in the name of Solomon who was the typical wise king, but also the typical experimenter in worldly pleasures. He had mastered the whole field of natural history as it was known at the time ; botany and zoology were alike familiar to him ; “ he spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall ; he spake also of beasts and of fowl, and of creeping things and of fishes.” His knowledge brought him fame and his fame brought him wealth. He had received the best that this world could give. And into his mouth therefore this author puts the expression of world-weariness : “ That which hath been is that which shall be ; and that which hath been done is that which shall be done : and there is no new thing under the sun.” We remember the visit of the Queen of Sheba, her praise of the king’s wisdom, her costly gifts ; and we are to imagine the wise king watch her departure, the long train of camels winding across the southern hills, till, as it disappears from view, he turns

away to write : "Vanity of vanities ; all is vanity."

That is the inevitable result of materialism either in thought or practice. The physical world will unfold secrets of thrilling beauty to the man who looks at it with the eyes of the spirit, but if it is regarded as so much mere matter and force, how dreary a thing it is ! The lessons to-day bring these thoughts before us ; we heard this morning the great myth of the Creation, and the vision of the new heaven and the new earth ; and again this evening we heard first of the birthday of the universe when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy, and then of the Holy City, new Jerusalem—the perfected social life of men.

Our knowledge of the material world in its purely material functions has been increasing for a century or thereabouts at an almost paralysing pace. And the natural result has been that many men have come to regard the laws of nature, as we call them, as though they were the only laws, and material forces as the only forces. And if we look at the world and at human life in that way, how dreary and

desolate it all appears ! There is a majesty, no doubt, in the ordered motion of the stars, but after all it is only a majestic futility. The solar system is very, very big ; but it is only a monstrous spinning-top. This earth of ours twirls aimlessly upon its axis and revolves aimlessly about its sun ; it comes back perpetually to the same place and always sets out on the ridiculous round again. "That which hath been is that which shall be, and there is no new thing under the sun."

And if we look at human life in this way, the same desolation marks it. Men appear as puppets, creatures of circumstance, with no power of shaping their own lives, no dignified end to pursue ; and death is the end of them ; and if they die with their purpose unrealised or their promise unfulfilled, it must remain so for ever. Human life and history is a mere repetition of the same incidents, the same motives issuing in the same success or failure ; "that which hath been done is that which shall be done, and there is no new thing under the sun."

But if we look at the world and life as they are illuminated by Christian faith, everything

is different. All the fixed laws and principles then become like the framework of bones which supports the living body. If there were nothing constant there could be no progress. The laws which govern our growth are indispensable to real development. If we might do or be anything we liked at any time, our lives would be a mere chaos ; one day a man might be a great scholar, another he would be an artist, another he would be a politician, another he would be a mere pleasure-hunter. And in such a life there is neither progress nor decay ; there would be mere meaningless change. For mere change without continuity is every bit as futile as mere constancy without progress. And so if we believe that this world is governed by God who has a purpose for it and for every soul in it, to which He is ever guiding us, we shall see the laws and rigid principles as the firm foundation on which His spiritual city is to be reared.

It is the same with human history ; were its course not governed and controlled by fixed laws, its changes would be like the changes of the coloured patterns of a kaleidoscope ; there would be no such thing as national

character. It is the ordered continuity of growth which gives history its meaning, and its goal is not chaotic licence, but the ordered freedom of the perfect civilisation, symbolised by the holy city which stands four-square in perfect orderliness.

How the world looks to us depends on how we look at it. We shall not find more than we expect to find. Deep calls to deep ; but if there are no depths in us, we shall only see the surface of the world and of life. For—

“ we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does Nature live :
Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud !
And would we aught behold of higher worth
Than that inanimate cold world allowed
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah ! from the soul itself must issue forth
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the Earth,
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element.”

The old Greeks had a curious theory that when we see any object it is because the light reflected by that object meets and commingles with a beam of light issuing from the pupil

of our eyes. That may be fantastic as an account of ordinary vision ; but it is a true parable of all spiritual perceptions. The Spirit of God in Nature calls to the Spirit of God in Man, but only the spiritually minded can hear that call. To the man whose outlook is all materialistic or whose thoughts and desires are all concentrated on the material side of life, everything will at last look drab and commonplace and dead. There is no satisfaction, no attainment, no end. " All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full ; unto the place whither the rivers go, thither they go again. All things are full of weariness. There is no new thing under the sun." But for the man who trusts in God, all this is merely the solid foundation on which he is to build the firm highway along which he is to march forwards, for there will always be ringing in his ears the words of Him that sitteth upon the throne—" Behold, I make all things new." It is not intellect that is needed for such knowledge of the world as this ; it is just a simple trust in God—

" All the lore its scholars need
Pure eyes and Christian hearts."

What is the practical conclusion to be drawn from all this ? In the first place, never chafe or fret at the routine of life ; never let it be a mere routine. Fight against the temptation to let each day be just like the last and each week or term just like the last, merely because the arrangement of its hours and the subjects that you work at are much the same. Use the fixed recurring periods as standards of progress, and try hard that each may find you further advanced than the last. Make the trivial round and common task your firm highway for the forward march, so that it is no more trivial or common, but the support of a life which is throughout adventurous as it presses on to new achievements.

And secondly, keep your eyes fixed on the future, not upon the past. The old nations looked back to the past for their golden age, and history for them was a decline. But in the hope of Christ we look forward to our Golden Age and press forward to the mark of our high calling. " Behold, I make all things new." It is not only some great event in the future which the words describe ; it is the eternal activity of God.

We are always tending to turn our backs to the past with yearning gaze and clinging regrets ; the past seems to hold what we love—the friendships now severed, the near and dear ones whom on earth we shall not see again. Yet our real joy is still before us if we will press on :

“ The best is yet to be.

The last of life for which the first was made.”

Forget the things which are behind and reach forward to those which are before ; and we shall find that nothing is lost. At the last when all severed friendships are re-knit, we shall find the fulfilment of the promise and the completion of the purpose which here seemed baffled and cut short. So we set ourselves to the next stage in the march, entrusting our own lives and those of all we love, alike in this world and in the world beyond the grave, into the hands of him who saith—“ Behold, I make all things new.”

VIII

THE THREE TEMPTATIONS

February 9, 1913.

S. Luke, iv. 1.—“And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness during forty days, being tempted of the devil.”

THE narrative of the Temptation, which forms the Gospel for to-day, must have been told to the disciples by the Lord Himself; there is no other source from which they can have obtained it. It is His own narration, of course in parable, of the spiritual struggles through which He passed at the opening of His ministry. And the Temptation derives its significance from the moment when it occurred; it comes immediately after the Baptism, at which He had heard the voice from Heaven

which said, "Thou art my beloved Son ; in Thee I am well pleased." We need not pause to ask whether that represents the first moment at which our Lord reached the conviction that He was the Messiah, or only the moment when He felt called to take up His Messianic work. In any case it marks the end of His life in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth, and the beginning of His public ministry. And at that time He feels Himself driven into the wilderness ; the Gospels do not represent it as a deliberate withdrawal into solitude, that He may work out His problems ; an overmastering impulse took possession of Him. St. Mark particularly gives this impression : " And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness."

We shall expect then to find that the Temptations have reference to the work which our Lord is just commencing. He is to take up the work of the Messiah ; that is to say, He is to found the Kingdom of God on earth and to be assured that the Almighty Power of God is His for the task He has to do. How shall He use that power ? And the parable in which He describes the struggle of those

days represents Him as tempted first to use His power for His own comfort. It was not that He thought of seeking it at anyone else's cost. What is represented by the temptation to turn stones into bread is not any idea of attaining to some ambition by thrusting other people aside or climbing on their shoulders ; no one would be injured. There would be the gain of His own comfort and no loss to a solitary soul ; how perfectly innocent ! But no : there must not be even that degree of selfishness, not even that amount of concern for bodily comfort, in the representative of God. Selfishness in its most innocent form has been set aside.

But how is He to set about His work ? He is to forget Himself in the doing of it, but what is the work itself to be ? Shall He conquer and rule the world as a soldier and statesman. He looks out over the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them. He knows that He can win them for the Kingdom of God if He will adopt worldly methods—if He will fall down and worship the Prince of this world. And Isaiah himself had spoken of such a Messiah, the Wonderful-Counsellor

who should break the rod of the oppressor, and rule from the throne of David with judgment and righteousness. But God's work must be done in God's way. Worldliness in its most alluring form has been set aside.

Shall He then by some means contrive to appear descending upon Jerusalem upborne by angels, flinging Himself from a pinnacle of the Temple, for the angels to come and support Him? He would be giving the sign from Heaven which the Scribes and Pharisees perpetually demanded; people would simply have to believe in Him. But we see from His answer that the Temptation is also that He should demand a sign for Himself, to convince Himself that God is with Him so that He may set about His work unhampered by doubt. But God's promise must be believed, not tested. "Thou shalt not put to the proof the Lord thy God." Infidelity in its most seductive form has been set aside.

That then is the nett result of the struggle of those forty days so far as it affected our Lord's conception of His own relation to His work. Selfishness in its most innocent

form, worldliness in its most alluring form, infidelity in its most seductive form—have all been rejected. And if we are to be followers of Christ, we also must reject them.

But let us consider it. Have we in any degree whatever overcome our natural tendency to use our powers and advantages for our own comfort. I am not speaking of gross selfishness,—the selfishness that is ready to realise an ambition or satisfy a desire at the cost of other people's suffering, though that too is in our natures. I am speaking of such concern about ourselves as does no harm whatever to anybody else—the mere securing of our rights, or of our comforts. There is no harm in this, except that it prevents our attention from being given completely to our duty to God and man, so that if that duty ever calls us to make large sacrifices we may find ourselves unable. There is no harm in enjoying all the good things which God has put within our reach, if we are ready to give them up should an opportunity of serving Him by doing so come to us. But that we should ignore our own interest is the primary condition of

discipleship ; “ if any man will come after me, let him ignore himself.” Try to be worthy of Christ in that greatest of all decisions which still lies before most of you, the choice of your profession.

The worldliness which Christ had to combat is itself a virtue as compared with the ordinary standards of most of us. His temptation was to make use of the world's methods to realise God's purpose. That temptation hardly touches us, because we are not even particularly anxious to realise God's purpose ; our temptation is to use the world's methods for the world's ends. But so far as we have a high ideal before us, we nearly always try to reach it by unworthy means. We see this on every side ; we see the great Socialist party, with its noble ideal of Brotherhood realised in the social order of the State, yet appealing with disastrous frequency to motives of envy and cupidity ; we see men filled with enthusiasm for Foreign Missions—the noblest of all causes—yet sometimes their zeal is tainted with religious jingoism.

And over and over again we know that great endeavours have come to nothing be-

cause the faith of their supporters was deficient. Again I am not speaking of a complete lack of faith, but of the one touch of doubt which blunts the edge of our effort. We are told that if we had one little seed of pure and absolute faith it would carry us through anything; I think it is equally true that doubt may be like a drop of deadly poison mixed with wholesome food. I do not mean doubt about this or that doctrine, but doubt about the right and wrong of some course of action, or about the power of right to triumph. For the real infidel is not the man who only denies the creed, but the man who in his actions shows that he is not trusting God.

I have been speaking of our Lord's three Temptations as they affected Himself. But there is another side to them; we must consider them also as they affected His work. Our Lord was to establish a kingdom, to win control over men. And He threw over all the wisdom of history; He deliberately flew in the face of all experience. He rejected just those three means of controlling men which have ever had appreciable effect. He

trusted perfectly and completely to the appeal of His character to men's hearts and consciences. They were to obey Him freely and of their own choice or not at all. And scarcely a single individual, not a single organisation—certainly not His own Church—has ever set out to follow Him.

I suppose that in all history there is nothing more entirely opposed to the Spirit of Christ as seen in His Temptations than the corrupt Christian Church in the days just before the Reformation. But though the contrast there is plainest, it is no more real than between Christ and all the devices of our so-called Christian civilisation, with its Law-courts and police-forces, its pomp and ceremony, its encouragement of selfishness and ambition and the love of marvels. And when some man of spiritual genius, some Francis of Assisi or George Fox or Leo Tolstoi, insists on the plain meaning of our Master's teaching, we wonder for a moment, but we do not alter our opinion or our practice.

A great Russian novelist has made one of his characters compose and tell a legendary fable, which I borrow with some changes,

putting it into my own words as a parable of what I have been saying : ¹

In the days of the Inquisition, this legend runs, our Lord returned to earth and visited a city where it was at work. Wherever He went people became happy and forgot their cares and griefs. He healed sick folk as of old, and seeing a funeral procession where a mother was mourning the death of her only son, he stopped the procession and restored the dead boy to life. This was in the Cathedral Square, and at that moment there came out from the Cathedral doors the Grand Inquisitor, an old man of over ninety years of age, clad now, not in the Cardinal's robe in which only the day before he had ordered the burning of a score of heretics, but in a simple monkish cassock. He saw what was done, and at once, pointing to the Lord, he said " Arrest Him." The guards who attended him moved forward to obey, and so great was his authority that no one tried to resist. He sent the Prisoner to a cell in the prison, and left Him there alone.

¹ The remaining paragraphs are borrowed, though not verbally, from *The Brothers Karamazov*, by Dostoevsky, Bk. v. Ch. v. *The Grand Inquisitor*.

But that night the Grand Inquisitor came to visit the Prisoner ; he sat down opposite Him and spoke ; and to all that he said the Prisoner made no reply.

“ I know why Thou art come,” said the Inquisitor ; “ Thou art come to spoil our work and to repeat the mistake which Thou madest in the wilderness. What did the great and wise spirit offer Thee ? Just the three things by which men may be controlled : bread and authority and mystery. He bade Thee take bread as an instrument of Thy work ; men will follow one who gives them bread. But Thou wouldest not. None were to follow Thee for what they could gain by it ; men were to follow out of sheer love and devotion, and that alone. We have had to correct Thy work, or there would be few to follow Thee at all. The wise spirit bade Thee assume authority ; men will obey one who gives commands and has the power to enforce his will. But Thou wouldest not. None were to obey Thee from fear of the consequences of disobeying ; men were to obey out of sheer love and devotion and that alone. We have had to correct Thy work or there

would be few to obey Thee at all. The wise spirit bade Thee shew some marvel, that men might be astounded and believe ; but Thou wouldest not. Men were to believe from perception of Thy grace and truth or not at all. We have had to correct Thy work and to hedge Thee about with mystery, or there would be few to believe on Thee at all.

“ And which of us has served mankind the better ? Thou hadst left all to men’s free choice ; freedom for Thee was the most sacred of all things. Some few heroic souls responded to Thy call ; but for most it was too difficult, and they were left unshepherded. Was it right to think only of the strong souls ? We have helped the weak. We have given them bread ; we have ruled them with authority ; we have spell-bound them with mystery : so that they who would have been lawless and miserable are orderly and happy. And now Thou art come to interfere, to repeat Thy great mistake in the wilderness, and to give men again Thy fatal gift of freedom. But it shall not be. For to-morrow I shall burn Thee.”

The Inquisitor ceased and still the Prisoner

made no reply ; but He rose from where He sat and crossed the cell, and kissed the old man on his bloodless lips. Then the Inquisitor also rose and opened the door. “ Go,” he said ; and the Prisoner went out into the night and was not seen again.

And the old man ? That kiss burns in his heart ; but he has not altered his opinion or his practice.

IX

EASTER DAY

March 23, 1913

S. John, xvi. 33.—“In the world ye have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world.”

So our Lord closed the long discourse to His Disciples on the night before the betrayal. We have been watching through this last week the conflict of the Passion ; we have seen Him all but overwhelmed with doubt and despair ; but He had entered the conflict certain of its issue. And to us, to whom that issue is not only a familiar fact but the dominating fact of all history, its commemoration comes every Easter Day as a challenge to new faith and work.

For the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is something very much more than the proof of His Messiahship ; it is more than the pledge

of our immortality ; it is more than the declaration of our Lord's Divinity. It is the vindication of the Divinity of God.

Where are we to look in this dark and sorrowing world for any trace of that union of boundless power with perfect goodness which is what we mean by the word—God ? There is power in the world, sure enough : but why should we think that that power is directed by goodness ? There is goodness in the world, sure enough : but why should we believe that the goodness has power to achieve its purpose ? The power that we see is often cruel ; the goodness that we see is often weak. Why should we believe in that union of boundless power with perfect goodness which is what we mean by the word—God ?

Such questions are flung in our face by the story of the Cross. There was the perfect goodness ; but it was defeated and broken. In that conflict goodness was on one side and power on the other. What confronted the Disciples was not merely the failure of a great idealist nor the frustration of all their hopes. It was the failure of God. If that were the end of such a life, then

God is not God as we have understood the Name ; He may be almighty, but if so He is not good ; He may be good, but if so He is not almighty. If the Cross was the end, then heaven is emptied of its Godhead and our prayers are merely pious wishes tossed into the vastness of space ; there is no God to hear them ; or, if there is, He is a God who cannot help.

But the Cross was not the end. Here, in the supreme instance where the problem must be settled one way or the other for ever, God acted, and made His action known. For all through the New Testament the Resurrection of our Lord is spoken of as the act of God the Father. " Him did God raise up having loosed the pains of death " ; " the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus " ; one might quote many similar expressions. This rings through the whole New Testament, this absolute certainty and assurance about God, because of what He had done in raising Jesus from the dead ; so that from it springs not only a new hope for men and a new energy of righteousness, but a new conception of the entire universe.

It is because of what He did on the first Easter Day that we can with full confidence confess our belief "in One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible." It is because of this that the triumph-song of the Lamb is one in which the whole creation joins: "and every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, and all things that are in them heard I saying 'Unto him that sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb be the blessing and the honour and the glory and the dominion for ever and ever.'"

And all of this is anticipated by the words of our Lord before the crisis; for the word translated "world" is "Cosmos"; *ἐγὼ νενίκηκα τὸν κόσμον*. "I have overcome the world; I have conquered the universe."

During the past week we have watched the conflict in which that conquest was achieved. We have seen what were the forces arrayed against Him, and against which therefore we as His followers are called to fight. And to-day, if our faith is worth anything at all, we know that we can overcome them. We claim the kingdoms of the world for

God and Christ; and we know that if we are faithful the claim will be made good, and all the world will bring its treasure to His feet. We face our own nation and know that if we are faithful it can be made like the city of God, free from envy and contempt, from hatred and indifference, the home of love and joy and peace.

Bring me my Bow of burning Gold !
 Bring me my Arrows of Desire !
 Bring me my Spear ! Oh clouds unfold !
 Bring me my Chariot of Fire !

I will not cease from mental fight,
 Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand,
 Till we have built Jerusalem
 In England's green and pleasant land.

We face our tasks unflinching; even the selfishness and impurities of our own hearts we face unflinching, for we know that the victory is sure.

And in that knowledge, having fresh in our minds the tremendous cost at which our Lord has purchased our security, we come in gratitude and love to pay our homage to Christ, crucified and risen, to Jesus, King Triumphant.

X

DOUBT

March 30, 1913 (Low Sunday).

S. Mark, viii. 11, 12.—“And the Pharisees came forth and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit and saith, Why doth this generation seek a sign? Verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.”

S. John, xx. 27.—“Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.”

So doubting Thomas is given the sign that was refused to the inquiring Pharisees. Why is the treatment different in the two cases? Why are the Pharisees rebuked for inability to read the signs of the times, while Thomas, who had doubted the plain statement of the Apostles, supported as it was by the emptiness

of the tomb, receives no rebuke, but is given the very sign that he demands ? The answer to this question will tell us a good deal about the kind of faith and loyalty that our Lord demands.

Our forefathers used to think that any doubt with regard to religious doctrines is wicked ; it was necessary that they should be reminded of the sympathy which our Lord showed for the doubts of St. Thomas. We are more inclined to look on any doubt with regard to religious doctrines as a fine thing, which marks us as what men call "advanced"—though very often it is only retrograde ; and it is necessary for us to be reminded that the Pharisees were condemned for requiring a sign. We feel inclined to protest that this was very proper scientific procedure ; of course they would not commit themselves to a position that was possibly dangerous and certainly eccentric until they had been persuaded by absolutely convincing evidence. But we see the real quality of this would-be scientific temper when it jeers beneath the Cross, " Let him come down from the Cross and we will believe on Him."

But their demand for evidence was not prompted by a love of truth. They did not wish to believe ; on the contrary, they wished not to believe, and they demanded the sign from heaven precisely because they believed that He could not give it ; they were ready to take His refusal as a confession of inability and therefore an excuse for their disbelief. And so their desire for a sign was itself a sufficient reason for refusing to give the sign ; for had it been given, their reason would have been convinced while their hearts were still unconverted ; and that is perhaps the worst thing that can befall a man. To think our Lord is the revelation of God and to wish He weren't, is about as far from discipleship as a man can be. And so our Lord deliberately leaves the Pharisees in unbelief rather than convince them against their will.

In just the same way the Appearances of our Lord after His Resurrection were granted only to those who knew and loved Him. There was no public manifestation to all the multitude ; but He appeared to Mary Magdalene, to James, to Cephas, to the eleven Apostles, to five hundred brethren. And to one who

had been a devoted friend He gave the full proof that was needed to remove his doubts.

St. Thomas seems to have been a rather literal-minded man. When our Lord had said, "Whither I go, ye know the way," he replied, "We know not whither Thou goest; how know we the way?" He thought that some actual journey was intended. But though he was prosaic, he was utterly loyal. When our Lord determined to go to wake Lazarus from the sleep of death, though the Jews had sought to kill Him when He was last in Jerusalem, it was St. Thomas who said, "Let us also go that we may die with Him." His refusal to believe in the Lord's Resurrection was no failure in loyalty, as was St. Peter's denial. There was in him no evil heart of unbelief. He was a plain blunt man that loved his Friend. And his Friend had died. Others said that they had seen Him, but he would not believe this unless he could see for himself and have proof that it was indeed his Friend that he saw. And this refusal to believe has no sin in it; in no manner of sense is it wrong. The insight of faith which can grasp the truth by perception

of its quality is something better than St. Thomas's doubt ; " blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed " ; this insight, which is really a part of imagination, St. Thomas lacked. But all that was in him was good ; he was compact of love and honesty ; and the evidence that he needed was immediately given.

There is a story of an Arab chief who was reported to have been killed in battle. His wealth passed to his two sons, being equally divided between them. One day the news arrived that the chief had not been killed but only wounded, and was now returning to his home. One of his sons believed this, and was angry because he would have to surrender his portion of the inheritance ; the other would not believe it, but was ready for any sacrifice if the news might prove to be true. One believed what he was told and the other disbelieved ; but the believer was disloyal and the disbeliever loyal.

The belief of our minds is not something unimportant ; for it will influence our affections and our conduct ; and it will influence the belief and thereby the affections and conduct

of our friends. Moreover the knowledge of truth is one of the greatest aims of human life. But in the spiritual life the heart counts for more than the head; loyalty of purpose is more important than correctness of doctrine.

People sometimes lament that the great fact of our Lord's Resurrection should be recorded for us in such a way as may fail to convince men's minds. If everything turned on it, they say, why is the evidence for it allowed to be anything short of irresistible? why should it be possible for honest men to doubt?

But if the evidence were convincing, the truth would be the prey of mere intellectual cleverness; we should grasp the truth here in the same kind of way that we grasp it—if we ever do—in geometry; and it would be most easily reached by the same people in this case as in that. But our Lord's method was always to reveal Himself only to those who loved Him; His Divinity is concealed by the veil of His Humanity from all except those, who, loving Him as Man, try to take His life as their own and so pass "through

the veil, that is to say His flesh," to the Divine secret that lies behind it.

It is the doubting heart, not the doubting mind, that is sinful. The doubts that are wrong come from the levity of mind that can see nothing great or noble, or from the clouded conscience when a man persuades himself that he may lawfully indulge in some forbidden pleasure. But perplexity of mind is no sin, if only the heart and will be loyal.

It is for this reason that a school like ours trains us rather by appealing to our sympathy and imagination than to our minds. It does more for us by influence than by instruction ; and it is its influence which is the abiding treasure of those who leave here for work elsewhere. You will have to meet doubts and perplexities. Men's minds in our day are full of questions to which we shall not in our life-time find the answer. Do not fear those questions ; but as you face them, cling to your knowledge of right and your loyalty to Christ. Never forget that faith is an experiment ; and if we want to be assured of the result we must first honestly make the experiment. "Come unto Me," says

Christ, "and I will give you rest"; and we shall never know whether the promise is true unless we have first come to Him.

And if we are loyal, the truth will be made clear, not now by the vision of Christ standing beside us and bidding us behold His wounds, but in the sense that He is with us and within us, ready to control our lives if we will have it so.

XI

OUR LORD'S ASCENSION

May 4, 1913.

S. John, xx. 17.—"Jesus saith to her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto the Father : but go unto my brethren and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God."

THE whole life of Christ is a parable in action ; it is the expression, in terms of human life, of the eternal realities of God. And therefore truths, which are really parts of one another, are presented to us one after the other. The suffering of God at the sin of the world, and His triumph over that sin, are really two sides of the same thing ; for it is in His suffering that He triumphs ; His Passion is redemptive and victorious. But in the setting out of this the Passion and the Triumph must be separated, for if any attempt were made to

set them forth together, the Triumph would alleviate the agony of the Passion, and the Passion would dim the splendour of the Triumph. And so the great truth of the redemptive glory of God victorious in suffering must be set forth in the successive stages of Passion, Resurrection and Ascension.

And of these the last, which was so great in the mind and imagination of the Apostles, has sunk nearly out of our thoughts. We can see why this is so. The pictorial form of it—the literal Ascension of our Lord's risen Body from the Mount of Olives, till "a cloud received him out of their sight," presented no difficulties to people who supposed that the earth was flat and stationary and that Heaven was "far above the starry height" as the hymn says. But if the earth is round and perpetually moving, it is hard to imagine the Ascension and impossible to take literally the words which tell us that He sat down at the right hand of God.

But that phrase alone is enough to shew us that it was never the literal and physical Ascension that was valued by the first disciples, for they did not suppose that God was

a Being of human form, with a right hand and a left. No doubt they believed in our Lord's physical Ascension ; but what they valued was the faith, underlying this belief, that God had indeed taken Christ to Himself, so that Christ would ever be wherever God is—and that is everywhere—and would be present with all the power of God.

In the nature of man there are many elements ; there is our body with its feelings and impulses ; there are the emotions—generosity, pity, affection ; there is the mind with its thoughts and schemes ; there is the will with its ambitions and aspirations ; and there is the spirit, with its capacity for fellowship alike with other men and with God—the faculty of love and worship.

All through the life of Christ we watch Him learning obedience through the things which He suffered. His spirit—His faculty of love and worship—was steadily tightening its hold upon will and thought and emotion and desire ; till at last, in the struggles of Gethsemane and Calvary, the obedience becomes complete, so that our Lord passes through Death and Resurrection and Ascension into

the spiritual world. And this winning of the spiritual world, this return to the Presence of God—which is in no one place whether above the sky or below the earth, for God is everywhere—is the inner meaning of our Lord's Ascension, the truth brought home to the Disciples by their experience as He blessed them upon the Mount of Olives.

But in that spiritual world there are no divisions of space ; so that in entering it He is set free from the limitations of His earthly ministry. In the days of His Flesh, the Presence that was in Palestine was not also in the same way at Rome or in ancient Britain. But because He is entered into the spiritual world, He can now be found by His people everywhere. His authority becomes infinite. While our bodies remain here, we can in heart and mind ascend to Him and with Him continually dwell. Because He is in heaven, He is everywhere on earth ; because He is ascended, He is here.

And so the risen Lord bids Mary Magdalene at the tomb not to touch or cling to Him until He is ascended. When He had uttered her name and she turned and exclaimed, " Rabboni "

—no doubt she had stretched out her hands towards Him. But it is not to that physical Presence, which could only be in one place at a time, that she is to cling. “Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended.” The object of her trust and love is to be the ascended Lord from whom we need never be separated unless we separate ourselves from Him; for the Father to whom He has gone is our Father, and His God our God. “Go unto my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.”

And so the Feast of the Ascension is the festival of Christ’s universal empire. It reminds us of His promise to be with us always, even unto the end of the world; it reminds us of His claim to universal Kingship and of His command to make disciples of all the nations.

This year His claim and command have been peculiarly vivid. For it is only a fortnight ago that we witnessed an event which may in the history of the future stand out as among the great turning points in the life of the world. We have seen the great empire

of China acknowledge the efficacy of Christian prayer. We have become used to the fact that China in the last ten years has made more progress than our nation has ever made in a century. At first the rapidity of her movements took one's breath away. Her whole social order rested on a system of education and examination which had continued unaltered for two thousand years. "In 1905, by one stroke of the vermilion pencil, the Empress Dowager abolished it completely and for ever." Of late the revenue of China has depended very largely on the opium traffic; but it was recognised that the opium habit was damaging the race, so the edict went forth, revenue considerations notwithstanding, and the opium traffic is now in process of extermination. (Just contrast that with our shilly-shallying with the parallel curse of the drink traffic, in which little except private interest is involved.) All of us can remember the recent revolution which ended the Chinese monarchy and established the Republic. China is celebrated for the ferocity of her civil strifes; but there were no massacres in that revolution, because

most of the revolutionary leaders were men who had been educated in the Christian Mission schools. But few of those who have watched this amazing progress were ready for what they read in the newspapers on April 18, when it was announced that the Imperial Government of China had asked that April 27—Sunday last—might be observed by all Protestant Christians as a day of prayer for the nation of China in the crisis through which it is passing; the Government also required that the various district authorities in China should attend the Christian Churches in their districts on that day. The change of attitude which this represents as compared with Chinese feeling towards Christianity ten years ago would be simply incredible if the fact were not before our eyes.

We cannot foretell the future. It is at least possible that in the history of the next thousand years China will count for as much as all Europe put together, and that historians of the period now opening may regard that edict issued last month as an event equal in importance to the conversion of Constantine. It is easy to raise doubts about the motives

of the Chinese rulers, but they do not touch the main point. It was and is of very little consequence to anyone except Constantine himself whether his conversion was dictated by religious or political considerations, or a mixture of the two. He saw his empire tottering ; he saw within it a strong coherent body, the Christian Church ; he embraced Christianity and used the Church's strength for the task of holding his empire together. And there may have been no more in it than that. But it marks an epoch in the establishment of Christianity in Europe. So in the case of China, there may be real religious convictions behind the action of the Government or there may not ; but the mere fact that the appeal was made, and that the Chinese people acquiesced in its being made, marks a new stage in the extension of the Empire of Christ. China has many and great troubles before her ; how great this moment may appear in her future history we cannot say ; perhaps that depends on the genuineness of the prayers which we offer in response to her appeal.

It seems as if the course of the history

of our day were designed to impress upon us just this one forgotten truth—that our religion is first and foremost missionary; that a professing Christian who does not care and work and pray for Foreign Missions simply has not found out what his professed religion means; for Christ is ascended to the Father; the Kingdom that He claims is the Kingdom of the world.

XII

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

May 28, 1914.

Quicumque Vult, §§ 3, 4.—“The Catholick Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance.”

FROM Advent until Whitsun Day the Church's Calendar brings before us in order the events which constitute the origin of the Christian religion. These events are important not just because they occurred, but because they made a revolutionary and very distinctive impression upon the minds and characters of those who witnessed their occurrence. It is not as mere items on a chronological list that they are significant; it is as governing factors in the experience of the Apostles. The work of Christ all reaches us through the impression that He made on them. He

wrote no book; He founded no formally constituted organisation with rules and objects. He just lived among men, and chose twelve "that they might be with him." That was all. They did the rest, though they knew perfectly well that all they did was really the work of His Spirit working in them.

And through them we have come to know Him—not merely to know about Him, but to know Him. For one of the marvels of the impression which He made on His own friends is that it is self-propagating. I know quite as much *about* Julius Cæsar as I know *about* Christ; but I have never imagined myself to be in the presence of Julius Cæsar and conversing with him. And if you say that our knowledge of Cæsar is after all mainly concerned with his public career and admits us to no intimacy so that the parallel is unfair,—I answer that it makes no difference. Men, whose conversation or whose private letters are preserved for us, do not on that account seem to be personally present; we know very intimately such men as Samuel Johnson and Charles Lamb, but we do not feel as if we had met them or conversed with them.

But this is just the feeling which the most intimate disciples of Jesus Christ have always had in regard to Him. Not only those who were with Him in Galilee or Jerusalem, who witnessed the outward manifestation of His liberation from Time and Space in the Ascension, upon whom His Spirit descended at the day of Pentecost—not only these, but thousands more who never saw Him in the flesh, with St. Paul at their head, testify that they have spoken with Him and He with them, as a man speaks to his friend. This conviction that Christ is here now, ready to listen to what I say and to speak in answer, ready to plead with my wilfulness and encourage my weakness — this is the bed-rock of the Christian religion. You may call it an illusion, if you like. But if so, it is an illusion which in its character, in its width of prevalence throughout the world, and in its persistence through the centuries, is unique in the experience of mankind.

Now it is this experience of countless Christian people which gives rise to the doctrines of the Trinity, the doctrine which the

Church brings before us to-day as summarising and containing within itself all that we have learnt in the events commemorated between Advent and Whitsun Day. I am not going to enter into the subtleties of this doctrine, nor into the historical conditions which led to its formation in just these terms and no others. But I know that many people regard it as a piece of antiquated jugglery, which cannot possibly have any real value for our practical religious life—for our prayers, our struggles with temptation, our moral and spiritual ambitions ; and they are annoyed to have it thrust at them not only in creeds, but at the end of every psalm and nearly every canticle, of very many hymns and several collects. And yet what is expressed—crabbedly it may be and obscurely (let any who can formulate it better do so by all means)—is just what makes Christianity vital and universal.

I was saying not long ago in this pulpit that the various elements in the one truth of God had to be put before us singly, one after another, if we were to grasp their full significance. The suffering and the triumph must

be set forth one after the other in Death and Resurrection if we are to take in the depth of the suffering and the completeness of the triumph.

So in our thought about God Himself as He is revealed in Christ we have to hold together ideas which would destroy each other without some such doctrine as that of the Trinity. For the conviction which had flashed into the Disciples' mind as an illumination of all the darkness of the world was just this, that in the Passion and Triumph of Christ they had beheld the truth of God. Yet they had seen Him amazed and disappointed ; they had seen Him shuddering from dread of what was coming upon Him. How should God, who knows all, be disappointed or fear the future ? And yet the weakness of His anguish must not be considered as belonging to His humanity alone ; whatever else in faith we cling to or reject, we must insist that just in His Passion we find God. And so it seemed to the early Church that the whole truth about God could not be told if He were regarded as just one Person like a single human person. The amazement and the dread would degrade

the infinite Majesty or the Majesty would absorb and cancel the amazement and the dread. And yet as Christians had learnt to know God, both were realities. And to "confound the Persons," as we are warned against doing, would be to allow our thought of the Father's Majesty to overshadow and cancel our thought of the Son's agony or of the Spirit's strivings as He "helpeth our infirmities with groanings which cannot be uttered." So when we are told that we must not confound the Persons, it means that we are to hold with all our force to each of these beliefs—that God is Infinite and Almighty, dwelling in the light that no man may approach unto and in the peace which passeth understanding; that God none the less suffers as Christ suffered in Gethsemane and on the Cross as He bears the burden of the world's sin and sorrow; that God none the less struggles with almost desperate effort in the age-long process whereby Nature and Humanity fight forwards to their goal. There are the three Persons of the Trinity. God the Father of an infinite Majesty; God staggering beneath a load too heavy for Him on the way from

Jerusalem to Calvary ; God struggling with many a disappointment and defeat against the brutality of Nature and the selfishness of Man.

But we are warned also against "dividing the Substance" ; these three Persons are not three Gods, nor three different parts of God. It is the conviction of Christian people that as they enter into communion with Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, they are in communion with God in all the fulness of His Being.

"But if so," you may say, "the whole doctrine becomes self-contradictory." The Church has never been under the smallest misapprehension on that point. Over and over again it has had to condemn as heresies theories which made the doctrine logical at the cost of abandoning some vital part of Christian experience.

"But you can't believe what contradicts itself." No, not if you mean rest finally content with it. The doctrine of the Trinity is not primarily a solution of a problem but a summary of experience. It states a problem ; and if the human mind sees no solution to that problem, why should we wonder ?

For the problem concerns the Infinite and the mind of man is finite. In any case, this doctrine is not offered us as an answer to all our problems, but as a summary of what Christian people have found in practical experience to be true.

The doctrine is as much of a puzzle as you like, but it is not an idle puzzle ; it is the life-breath of the Christian religion. The difference between that religion and another might almost always be stated by saying which of the three Persons that other religion ignores or denies. So the Mohammedan worships the First Person without the Second or the Third ; so Hinduism at its best is the worship of the Second Person (the Logos) without the First and Third—and also of course without the revelation of the Word made Flesh ; and most of the agnosticism of our own day is, under the surface, a trust in the Third Person to the exclusion of the First and Second.

What is it then that this great Christian doctrine does for us if we accept it in its entirety ? Remember that a man's vital need of religion begins when he is aiming at something too great for his unaided strength

or fighting a temptation too powerful for his unaided strength. As long as we only aim at reaching the standard apparently accepted by the people about us, and our own natures give no serious trouble, our religion is likely to be a mere bye-subject which adds some flavour to life but does not control it ; and then for practical purposes the precise form of our belief matters very little. But it is quite different when the real struggle of life begins. The man finds that he is utterly failing to keep the law of the Holy God ; and he has no strength to keep it ; he struggles and is always defeated ; he knows himself as one displeasing to God. What shall he do ? If God is for him only the Almighty Monarch, issuing commands and punishing offenders, what is left but mere despair ? And he cannot think of God as merely forgiving the wrong and passing it over, for he knows that God is holy and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. A man who believes only in God the Father, and honestly faces the facts of his own life, is likely to fall into despair and through despair into vice.

But then he remembers that this is not

the whole truth about God; there comes before his mind the Figure of the Man of Sorrows; he hears the pleading voice that begs forgiveness for the torturers; he hears the dying thief receive the promise of the joys of Paradise. And he knows that the appeal of love which stirs him, no less than the command of holiness which terrified him, has in it the irresistible power of Almighty God.

Irresistible—yes, if it can find a heart and will on which to act at all. But again the man despairs; for he has stood at the foot of the Cross many times; he has partaken of the mystical Feast, the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ; and still the goal is unreachd; still the enemy is unconquered; it seems there is nothing in him of which the Divine Love may take hold; his desire for goodness is too weak, and it is overlaid and crushed by other desires, inherited from nature and imposed by environment.

And then at last hope dawns. For he knows that the desire for goodness is not really weak; it is omnipotent with the omnipotence of God;

it is the stirring in the soul of God the Holy Spirit, who is at work also in the nature and environment which had seemed to weigh him down. And so at last his despair is gone; the process may be long and painful, but he knows that unless he merely hardens his heart and sets his will deliberately against God and goodness, he is bound to succeed at last.

And so if a man maintains—and only if he maintains—a living trust in God in each of His three great functions—Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier—he is free for ever from moral despair. He may begin at this point or that; his problems may be of any type; but in this whole truth, and only in this whole truth, he has the assurance of moral victory and ultimate fellowship with God. “He therefore that wishes to be secure must thus think of the Trinity.”

God from Heaven commands; God from Calvary pleads; God in our hearts makes answer. And in all that He does God is Almighty. “For that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe

of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality.

“Holy, Holy, Holy : Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most High.”

XIII

THE SIN OF STUPIDITY

October, 26, 1913.

I *Cor.* xiv. 20.—“Brethren, be not children in mind ; howbeit in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men.”

THE effort after moral goodness or the full appreciation of religious feeling is always liable to end in neglect and even contempt for the intellect. For it is quite true that men may use their wits to help them towards evil ends, or to undermine religious faith. It is possible to be a clever scoundrel. And this fact has obscured the equally certain truth that real goodness and deep religion are incompatible with stupidity. Of course I do not mean that what is ordinarily called cleverness is necessary to goodness of character, but it is certainly true that openness and readiness of mind is necessary to goodness.

No nation, I imagine, has ever gone so far as England in its neglect and contempt for the intellect. The average Englishman has no interest whatever in Truth. When he speaks of telling the truth he only means saying what one thinks, which very often is not the truth. But telling the truth ought to mean speaking of things as they really are ; and before we can do that we must find out the truth about them. Anyone can express in moderately appropriate language the ideas which happen to be succeeding one another in his mind ; but if the ideas are false, the expression of them will not be telling the truth, but an utterance of falsehood.

We pride ourselves on being practical. But as the word is generally used, a practical man means one who fits like a cog-wheel into the machine of business or professional life and there revolves as the surrounding machinery requires ; by a practical man, in fact, we usually mean a man who strictly speaking does nothing. But it is clear that if a man is to take any real action, he must act by some plan, and if the plan is a bad one, he will fail. For our act is not what we intend to do,

nor the bodily movements which we make ; our act is the whole train of circumstance which we initiate,—all that happens in consequence of our existence. When this on the whole is good, we have done right ; when this on the whole is bad, we have done wrong.

Our popular writers flatter our habitual neglect of the intellect. One may often read books about school-life which hold up to admiration boys who leave their brains to grow as best they may and spend their time in agreeable adventures ; it is suggested that in after life they become fine soldiers or something of the kind. But they don't do so really ; it is true that they may gravitate into the Army, and when there they put their own heads and those of their unhappy men into an elementary ambush.

And the stupidity which we need to avoid is a stupidity that comes upon clever people quite as much as on the slow-witted. The slow and steady type is ready to repeat for ever what is said by the majority of those whose incomes and lack of culture most nearly approximate to his own ; and other members of that majority are in the same way following

him and all his friends. But the man of quick wits is liable to a stupidity quite as great—the stupidity of saying the exact opposite of what is said by most of the people whom he meets. Neither is really thinking or caring for the truth. What we need is openness and readiness of mind, and that is a quality obtainable by all. One result of this will be the discovery of our own limitations, and ignorance of them is one of the worst forms of stupidity. Some of you no doubt have read Thackeray's book "The Newcomes"; and you will remember how kind old Colonel Newcome tried to manage other people's money affairs and reduced those people to great want. Because he was kindly we are expected to excuse him. But his conduct was undeniably wicked; and the source of his crime was stupidity; he did not mean to do harm, in malice he was a babe; but unfortunately he was a babe in mind also.

It may make my meaning clearer if I give one or two samples of the kind of prejudice which we all idly accept from very different regions of human experience. Let us take first a historical one; no one, I presume, will

venture to dispute that the greatest institution in European history, ancient or modern, has been the Papacy; and a great number of people complacently believe that this institution, whose greatness and power they admit, is based on nothing but priestly ambition and popular superstition, whereas it was for at least two centuries, and probably for much longer, the chief civilising agency in the western world. It is quite easy to avoid falling into the popular English error; but many are quite content to go on repeating the old libel. And this piece of ignorance and stupidity has a practical enough result, in that it helps to perpetuate the disunion of Christendom and therefore its impotence; for a divided Christendom can accomplish nothing.

Or again, we must all have met with people who contentedly believe that the whole of the funds owned by the great Trade Unions are spent in creating and maintaining strikes, while as a matter of fact over 80 per cent. is spent in sick-pay, unemployment pay, and other benefits, in fact in assisting the much praised quality of thrift. And here too an avoidable

and therefore culpable ignorance has bad results, for this and similar obstinate misunderstanding of Trade Unions and their aims, in the minds of the well-to-do, creates in the artisan world a quite pardonable conviction that the arrogant stupidity and self-complacent ignorance of the middle and upper classes now constitute a national peril of the first magnitude.

Let me give one more illustration of a common and disastrous prejudice taken from nearer home. Just because the readiness to take hard knocks without flinching is a proof of a certain grit and a valuable part of our discipline, we are very liable to suppose that a boy who can show indifference to bodily pain on the football field or elsewhere is the sort of man who can be trusted to stand firm for a conviction when opinion runs against him. Schoolmasters at least are aware of the abundant instances to the contrary. Physical courage is no guarantee of moral courage; indeed physical courage is often helped by lack of imagination, but without imagination moral courage is impossible. No one is going to face ridicule or censure unless he

has a clear vision of the value of the principle for which he stands and of the evil involved in its defeat.

If goodness of character means more than control of the grosser passions, if it means the capacity to serve our nation as useful citizens, it is unobtainable by anyone who is content to let his mind slumber.

“Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever,” wrote Charles Kingsley in a girl’s album; a writer has lately suggested that Kingsley’s controversy with Newman showed that he had his wish; he was more good than clever; but the result was that he misunderstood, and in consequence insolently libelled a saintly man. He was good in the ordinary sense of the word; but he would have been still better if he had not been also stupid.

And of course the field which stupidity claims for its very own is politics. A professional politician is almost in duty bound to be stupid, or at least to speak as if he were. For he has to say what will please his followers, most of whom like demonstrating in favour of their watch-words, but dread the process of thinking, for fear they should find out that

those watch-words have no real meaning. We suffer it is hard to say how much from the combined efforts of the stupid conservative who thinks all change is wrong, and the stupid radical who thinks any change is right. Can we not—those at least of us to whose education much time and money has been given—can we not detach ourselves from the fooleries of party and just honestly think?

And those who will not keep their minds alive are permanently shut out from the best things in life. The command that we should enter the Kingdom of Heaven as little children does not imply mental sluggishness; for the minds of children are as a rule very restless and very candid. They ask questions which sorely puzzle their elders who have as a rule transferred their interest from the search for truth to the maintenance of a tradition; and they utter inconvenient truths with an embarrassing simplicity.

We see then pretty clearly that the really stupid man cannot be altogether a good man, for even in his efforts to do good he will do harm through ignorance or misunderstanding of the facts. Remember then that your train-

ing here in knowledge and thought is not to enable you to make a position for yourselves in the world, but to supply you with the instrument which is indispensable for effective goodness.

And believe me, there is hardly any joy in the world like the joy of understanding some great subject. Moreover it is one of those good things of which the more one person has the more there is for all others besides.

And above all is this true of religion. As long as we merely accept without question something which we have been told, we shall never find its full power and value. It is only as we think it out for ourselves, honestly observing how much of what we are taught has already come true in our own experience, and where we still fail to reach what the saints describe, that we come to realise what our faith is or can be. And this needs to be much insisted on just now. A very competent observer has lately published his conviction that "the majority of the fairly well-endowed adherents of the Church of England to-day are astonishingly lax in belief and practice. It would hardly be an exaggera-

tion of the truth to say that their ignorance of the doctrine and discipline of the Church to which they belong has no parallel in any English laity since the Conquest.”¹

In religion as elsewhere a wise man will respect authority ; that is to say he will acknowledge the probability that what is asserted by the most spiritual souls of successive generations is true. And so he will try to live in the light of that belief ; but he will not pretend that he himself personally holds that belief with all his soul until he has for himself seen its truth and felt its force.

After all I am only pleading for honesty of mind. Not everyone is required to be brilliant in intellect any more than everyone is required to be a saint. But we are all required to be honest in thought, word, and deed. The man who lazily accepts a prejudice is mentally dishonest just as the man who borrows what he can never repay is financially dishonest ; he is spreading deception around him ; and on the whole mental dishonesty does the more harm of the two.

It is worth while to consider the fact that

¹ Archdeacon Peile : *God ór Mammon*.

the Lord whom we profess to follow stands out before men as the embodiment of just such honesty. When other teachers were quoting texts from the Old Testament without any reference to their real meaning,—as even St. Matthew and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews freely do—our Lord always quotes it in the original sense. In the debates in which He is involved by His opponents He is always master of the situation, not because of any subtlety or cleverness, but because His mind, unprejudiced by convention, always faced the real issue quite plainly. So in to-day's Gospel we read of the question of the Pharisees and Herodians—unholy alliance—whether they should pay tribute to Cæsar. They hoped to “entangle him in his talk.” If He said Yes, the Pharisees could say he was no patriot; if He said No, the Herodians could accuse Him of disloyalty. But He says neither. He reminds them that they use the Roman coinage which gave them easy access to all the markets of the world and that they must pay for their privileges if they want to enjoy them. “Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God

the things that are God's." And they are reduced to a wondering silence. It is the answer not of cleverness but of honesty; and no cleverness would have been so effective.

Be honest then in thought and above all in religious thought. Respect what you are told by those who have a right to teach. But never be content to accept anything merely because you are told it. Put it to the proof by thought and action. Test your faith in the crucible of criticism and by the experiment of life. Only so can you win the right to say at last to your teachers—"Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard Him ourselves and *know* that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

XIV

ENERGY

(St. Paul's Day)

January 25, 1914.

Acts, v. 34, 35, 38, 39, 40.—“There stood up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in honour of all the people, and commanded to put the men forth a little while. And he said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves as touching these men, what ye are about to do Refrain from these men, and let them alone : for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown : but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them ; lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God. And to him they agreed.”

ix. 1. “Saul, breathing threatening and slaughter.”

WHAT a contrast between the master and the pupil ! And all in the master's favour, as it seems at first. We have the picture of a somewhat excited assembly—“they were cut to the heart and were minded to slay

them"; and there rises a venerable old man, who for his learning and character is universally revered; he deprecates hasty action; he has no clear verdict to pronounce himself, but he is sure that no religious movement can succeed unless the power of God is in it. So he urges them to leave the new teachers alone, and see what comes of their work. What could be wiser or more dignified?

A little later the same trouble is stirring again. A good deal has happened in the interval; in particular, St. Stephen has made it clear that Christianity made the law of Moses obsolete; and we do not know what Gamaliel thought at this later date. But we find a young man rushing in where previously Gamaliel feared to tread—"Saul, breathing out threatening and slaughter."

If the story stopped there, the contrast would seem to be all in favour of Gamaliel. But the story does not stop there. The fiery young man became the Apostle whom we commemorate to-day, while Gamaliel is now known chiefly as the master at whose feet once sat the young Saul of Tarsus.

Gamaliel may have been right, and Saul of Tarsus wrong; but there was more real virtue in the young man's error than in the old man's wisdom. That sort of wisdom leads to no results; the best of which it is capable is merely to prevent someone else from checking progress. It is safe from the faults of partisanship; but is equally far from the merit of effectiveness.

But the Saul who breathed out threatenings and slaughters was also the Paul who laboured more abundantly than they all. There is no record in history of greater energy or greater effectiveness. Try to imagine what travelling was like in those days, whether by sea or land, and then recall the journeys of St. Paul. Remember the perils he faced—perils of rivers, of sea, perils among strangers, among fellow-countrymen, among false brethren; scourged, imprisoned, shipwrecked; never was such a life of hazard and adventure; and the spirit that sustained him in those labours for the Church, from the time when he became convinced that the Church was right, was the same which had made him the most ardent of persecutors

in the days when he believed that the Church was wrong.

One great lesson of his life—the lesson which I would impress upon our minds to-day—is just this duty of acting with all our vigour for the cause that seems to us right. The fact that there is a great deal to be said on the other side ought not to diminish our energy one jot. There was a great deal to be said against Christianity in St. Paul's time ; very many good people were saying it ; he had once said it all himself, so he was quite familiar with the points. But when once he is brought to believe that in spite of it all Christianity is the truth, those familiar adverse points are powerless to moderate his course.

People sometimes discuss whether most is done in the world by broad-minded or narrow-minded people ; it is suggested that breadth of mind and a capacity to see several sides of a question are incompatible with vigour and directness. But there is no evidence of this whatsoever. We all know several people who are peculiarly capable of seeing all round a question and are also

full of energy ; and we all know several people also who never see more sides than one and yet do nothing. It is quite possible to be broad-minded and active ; it is quite possible to be narrow-minded and sluggish.

Of course it is our duty to think out our course of action and its effects as carefully as we can ; it is our duty to see it in all its bearings ; but when the time for action comes, we must make up our mind and act with all our vigour. Very often it is difficult to decide what line to take. The balance of argument seems very even ; but if it tips one way by the slightest movement, follow it and act that way with all the force of which you are capable. Never let the difficulty of deciding be transformed into a difficulty of acting when you have decided. That is the only chance you have of accomplishing anything in this world ; and nothing is a thing which it is always wrong to have done.

This does not mean that provided we do something, it matters little what we do. On the contrary, it matters infinitely. Mere worship of force or energy, divorced from

thought or feeling, is stupid. And equally stupid is the notion that it is better to be a splendid villain than a common-place good citizen. The splendid villain does not exist ; he is a figure made up of virtues and vices, and the splendour is all due to the virtues—the courage, or generosity or the like. No vice, on whatever scale, can ever appear admirable, except by allying itself with some great virtue. We must want to do what is right ; and we must do absolutely all we can to make sure what is right ; but when the time for action comes we must make up our minds to the best of our ability and act with all our force.

In most of our personal affairs duty is pretty plain ; in work and games and our opportunities of usefulness in the House we find the sphere where we are to show our energy. But we must come out of our own circle some day and take our part in the work of God in the world. What right have we to pray “Thy Kingdom come” if we do nothing to bring it nearer ? It was no petty point of personal conduct upon which St. Paul’s judgment was changed by

his vision on the Damascus road ; it was his attitude to that great movement in regard to which Gamaliel had expressed himself so wisely. And it is great movements that challenge our judgment now. Democracy, Trade Unionism, Socialism, Syndicalism, Education, Nationalism, Imperialism,—all of these and many more are calling to us ; and we must in our measure help them or resist them.

Do you ask why we should not leave them altogether alone, and go about our own business ? I reply by asking why have we with a few thousand others been singled out to receive so long and expensive a training, if it is not to fit us for forming a judgment on great issues ? Our sympathies and affections have developed in comparative freedom from the temptations which may distort and warp them ; we have leisure for the training of our minds when most Englishmen are already in the mill or the workshop or the mine ; the school itself is a miniature society, in which we can learn if we like the principles of loyalty, patriotism, and citizenship. It is vital to our country's welfare

that someone should be capable of seeing all the points of view on such great matters as I mentioned ; and who shall do it if we refuse ?

Do not then stand aside in Gamaliel's way and say with a spurious reverence that you will leave these things alone to see whether God prospers them or not. Make up your minds, as the time comes, and remember that your training here is your preparation for that decision. You may decide wrongly ; and then, like St. Paul, you will have it on your conscience that you persecuted the good cause. But if you have made your choice honestly, with the most diligent thought that time and your own capacities permit, you will find your mistake in course of time, whether by blinding illumination or by gradual perception. Do the best you can, and then, but not till then, you may leave the issue in God's hands.

Don't stand on one side then, when the cause of God is calling. For in the turmoil of our day His cause must either gain or lose. And do not think to be devout, and leave the work to Him. That is not being

devout ; it's being idle ; and in spite of the usual English opinion, the two things are not the same. You can't leave these matters in God's hands, because He has already left them in yours. "The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods." That is the way that God is King ; He leaves the welfare of His kingdom in our hands. "Occupy till I come." And if, after all that has been done for you, you are content with keeping your own life straight and will not come to the help of the Lord against the mighty, because the issue is so confused and it is so hard to make up one's mind, you will have to come at last and say : "No doubt I might have invested this talent that You gave me ; but I never could hear of any investment that was absolutely safe ; and as after all it was Your talent and not mine, I did not like to risk it ; it is just as good as it ever was ; I took great care of it ; I wrapped it up in a napkin."

"Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness."

Has it ever struck you that there are two types not mentioned in that parable of the talents? There is no mention of the man who deliberately wastes his talent. But we don't need that. If the servant who brings no profit is cast into outer darkness, we need not inquire what awaits the servant who deliberately brings loss. He is the traitor, of whom it is said: "Good were it for that man if he had not been born."

But there is yet another type. We may imagine, may we not? a man who came empty-handed; he had tried with all his powers; but he had been unfortunate; the money is all gone; he tried, but he is a failure. Why is he not mentioned? Surely because it is only our shortness of vision that lets us speak of failure. In the end, no right endeavour ever fails. We may fall into error and failure for a time, but if in heart and will we are fellow-workers with God, then His wisdom will give us guidance and His power success.

So let us listen for the call of God not only in our own consciences, but in the great movements of our time. Let us pray for

God's help as we choose our course, and then, with the dauntless energy of St. Paul, forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forth to the things which are before, let us press on toward the goal unto the prize of the call upwards which God gives in Christ Jesus.

XV

WORSHIP AND MEDITATION

February 8, 1914.

Psalm xciv. 6, 7.—"O come, let us worship and fall down : and kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is the Lord our God."

WITHOUT worship there can be no great depth of religion in a man's life. But most of us give little thought or time to worship as distinct from prayer or supplication. Our tacitly accepted religious belief constitutes a sort of background to our life, and we attend to it when other things fail. Our religion is kept, like the Income Tax of earlier generations, for some crisis or emergency. If we hear of some sick person for whom prayer has been offered, we assume at once that he is at death's door ; why should men resort to any measure so extreme as prayer, we seem to argue, unless ordinary medical skill

is failing? And in our own devotional life, though we *say* our prayers indeed every day, it is not till we are in some serious danger or harassing perplexity or desperate need that we really put ourselves whole-heartedly into God's hands. There is some religion in our lives, but our lives as a whole are not religious.

By worship as distinct from prayer or supplication I mean the seeking and enjoying of the Presence of God, not for the sake of anything which we may gain, not to make ourselves better or stronger, but merely for the sake of being with Him. Most of us only turn to God when we want something; and when we have said what we want, we turn away again. If we treated a human being so, he would rightly think us most offensive. And we know that what we want of anyone for whom we care is not their gifts but their company; we may ask for this or that which we want sometimes, and we are glad of their presents; but what we chiefly want is just to be with them.

And that is what we ought to want also of God. So it will be worth while to consider

why we do not feel more of such a desire and how we may bring ourselves to feel it.

The answer is to be found in two practices which are inseparable from one another—worship and meditation. Worship is itself the enjoyment of the Presence of God. It is the pouring out of our soul to Him in sheer adoration of His greatness and gratitude for His goodness. There should be in it no thought of ourselves at all, neither of our sins nor our needs. It should be like the joy of going home after a long absence, joy which is all in the present, with no hopes or expectations in it because the mere pleasure of being there is enough to fill the soul.

The Church service is full of such worship ; think only of the *Te Deum* and the *Magnificat*. The former, it is true, contains one or two brief petitions, but mostly it is a shout of joy in the thought of God being what He is. Those two Canticles are the parts of the service in which, in this Chapel, most people seem to join. But I expect that many of us think very little about what we are singing. That does not make our singing worthless ; for the words lodge somewhere in our mind

as the result of our perpetually uttering them, and help to create a temper or disposition which will be more capable of genuine worship if we ever try to make our worship real. But while it may be a preparation for worship, it is not yet actual worship. Naturally if we thus miss opportunities put in our way, we are not likely to make opportunities for ourselves. And most of us leave no room at all for real worship in our private prayers.

It is something that we have to learn, and which we only learn with great effort. Why should we suppose that the supreme business of life will come easy? And there is only one way of learning either this or anything else, that is by doing it—feebly and badly at first, but perpetually better as we go on trying. That is how you learn to write Latin prose or to throw a cricket-ball; and that is how you must learn to worship, if you are ever to be able to do it.

But, as I said just now, worship is inseparable from meditation. We cannot feel joy in the Presence of God unless we know who He is. We must give time to thinking

of Him. And again this must mean, not working out our reasons for believing that He exists or how His Being is made known in His works (though that too is a right thing for some of us at least to do), but thinking out for ourselves the meaning of what has been believed by those who have known Him best.

To some extent we do this already. If you were to make a list of your dozen favourite hymns, you would find that a great number of them are not addressed to God at all. They are addressed to ourselves: in them we remind ourselves of what we really know about God. So it is in such a hymn as "When I survey the wondrous Cross." Let us take such hymns to help us in fixing in our minds what we really know, or can know, about God. Let us sometimes say them to ourselves slowly and thoughtfully, trying to bring their meaning home to ourselves. Let us do the same with the Canticles or with our favourite Psalms.

Do you ask when this is to be done? Where is an opportunity to be found for such things? Well, of course there is no difficulty

if you really want to do it. But the most obvious time is at your evening prayers. Make it a rule never to ask God for anything until by really attentive reading of some part of the Bible, or by use of a Psalm or Hymn, or in some such way, you have brought vividly before your mind some part of the fulness of God's nature.

Those who are communicants have the best of all opportunities in the time of waiting at the Communion Service. Don't spend all that time on yourselves, not even on your greatest needs ; nor spend it all on thoughts of this world at all. Let part always be given to the thought of God in Himself. Try, as the service bids us, to lift up your hearts unto the Lord and join in the unceasing adoration of the Angels and Archangels and the whole company of Heaven.

And beside this piecemeal realisation of the Divine, try to enter more fully into the heritage of the knowledge of God which we can claim if we will. Take the Creeds, the great summaries of God's revelation of Himself in Christ, and try to realise the meaning of the separate clauses for your own

life. It would be good for us to choose some period—say Advent or Lent—in which every year on the successive Sundays we went through the Creeds clause by clause, trying to see more clearly not only the meaning but the importance of each, and why it matters.

So we may consider the words “I believe in God the Father Almighty.” First remember that to believe in a person does not mean merely to believe in his existence but to put trust in him. So we begin our Christian profession by saying, “I trust in God.” That must mean that I intend to act in the world in accordance with the will of God, in full confidence that He will give me strength to do it; “the Father”—who will not leave His children in the lurch; “Almighty,” so that His will is bound to prevail. Nothing can be of so much practical importance as that belief. Call it to your aid next time you see an action you ought to do or an attempt you ought to make, but from which you shrink because you fear failure. I believe, I trust, in God the Father Almighty—so failure is out of the question: “with God all things are possible”;

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Then do the action, or make the attempt.

Or take the last paragraph of the Apostles’ Creed. “I believe in the Holy Ghost”;—the Spirit of God, who proceedeth from the Father and is at work in all the world; but who works with full power in the hearts of those who have been under the influence of the Life and Death of Christ—“Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son”—and whose aid therefore we can find best by turning our minds to the Father Almighty or to Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.

“The Holy Catholic Church”:—think what it means that our weak and intermittent trust in God should be supported by the heroic faith of all the great saints and martyrs; what it means that the Body of Christ, the instrument through which He does His work, should be this great society of which we are members, and what the claim of the Church upon our loyalty and service must therefore be.

“The Communion of Saints”: keep it before your mind that Death makes no division in the Fellowship of Christ’s disciples; we

can still repay our debts to loved ones who are passed away, for at every stage of our advance there is joy in Heaven.

“The Forgiveness of Sins”: try to realise first the guilt of sin which costs God such agony as we behold in the Passion and Cross of Christ, and then the depth of love that is ready to bear that agony; and be thankful that you are a member of that Society of the Church, that Fellowship of the Saints, which keeps alive in the world the story of His love and so brings its influence to bear on you.

“The Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting”: let us look forward to the life beyond death as something richer, fuller, more interesting and valuable than our life here and now.

And then realise also how all of this fits together. “I believe in the Holy Ghost,” who, working through “the Holy Catholic Church,” builds up “the Communion of Saints,” through membership of which we obtain “Forgiveness of Sins,” which is the condition of “the Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting.”

What I have said is a very sketchy illustration of the sort of meditation that I mean. Each must do it for himself, with what help from books or sermons that he can find. And if its full value is to be realised, it must be done regularly and systematically.

But if we try to win a perpetually fuller grasp of the faith which we have inherited, we shall find ourselves drawn spontaneously to worship. Worship consists of praise and thanksgiving; thanksgiving is being glad that God has done what He has done; praise is being glad that He is what He is. If the faith of which the Creeds are a summary is becoming real to us, we shall be perpetually pouring out our hearts in praise and thanksgiving.

And the greatest of all themes of meditation, the greatest stimulus to worship, I have so far omitted—the Life of Christ Himself. Think of it part by part: but think of it also as a whole. Read the story of it over and over again, always expecting to find more in it than you had seen before. And remember as you read that it is God Himself

whose character you are studying. It is God who takes the little children in His arms and blesses them; it is God who lets the sinful woman wash His feet with her tears; it is God who dreads the pain by which alone mankind may be redeemed; it is God who by enduring that pain conquers death and sin. Think of God, worship Him and pray to Him, as He is there made known. Take care that the picture of Christ is before your eyes or His Figure before your imagination in your public or private prayers. Then your prayer will become fervent and your worship spontaneous, for in prayer and worship you will feel that you are coming home and spending time where you like best to spend it. "In Thy presence is the fulness of joy and at Thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore."

"Thou hast made us for Thyself," says St. Augustine, "and our souls are restless until they find rest in Thee."

"Jesu, Thou joy of loving hearts,
 Thou Fount of life, Thou Light of men,
 From the best bliss that earth imparts
 We turn unfilled to Thee again,

“ We taste Thee, O Thou Living Bread,
 And long to feast upon Thee still ;
 We drink of Thee, the Fountain-head,
 And thirst our souls from Thee to fill.

“ O Jesu, ever with us stay ;
 Make all our moments calm and bright ;
 Chase the dark night of sin away,
 Shed o’er the world Thy holy light.”

Such worship will purify our hearts and control our conduct as nothing else can do. But it is not to be sought merely as a means to what we ordinarily call goodness. If we thus dwell with Christ—if we abide in Him and He in us—we shall do His work. And thus sharing His Life of service manward and of worship Godward we are lifted above the changes and chances of this fleeting world into the presence of God’s eternal changelessness, where things are as they have always been and have been as they ever will be ; and thus we receive the promise of the Lord that where He is there also shall His servant be.

Come then, let us worship : for He is the Lord our God.

XVI

ETERNAL REDEMPTION

March 29, 1914.

Mk. iii. 29.—"Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin."

Heb. ix. 11, 12.—"Christ having come a high priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption."

ETERNAL sin—eternal redemption ; there are the two poles between which the life of men oscillates and by which the value of our life is gauged. Sin is always terrible ; but some sins seem to be mere passing episodes in our life. They do not represent our permanent nature or character. Even if the actions resulting from them are the

worst possible, yet sometimes we can say, "None the less, I know that those actions do not really represent me ; if I am judged by them alone I shall be judged unjustly." And when we can say that—when we hate the evil that is in us, even if we do not feel sure that we can resist—we are not guilty of an eternal sin.

And in just the same way we may sometimes be lifted above the ordinary level of our lives, only to sink back again to that same level a little later ; or after some wrong act we have made reparation, and feel that we have won forgiveness from God and men, and yet are not secure against repeating the wrong act in the future ; and then we have not won eternal redemption.

Let us see how the two phrases are introduced in the two passages before us. In the former, we read how our Lord was accused of using evil powers to work His miracles. He had offended the susceptibilities of the religious leaders by His comparative indifference to the observance of the Sabbath ; and so, though His works were manifestly good works, these bigots are ready to ascribe

them to Beelzebub. What He had actually done was to restore speech and sight to a man who had been dumb and blind ; nothing could be more manifestly good. And to these people who call it a work of evil powers He says in effect—Say what you like about Me—“ Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him ”—but if you call a plainly good work evil there is no hope—“ Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness but is guilty of an eternal sin.” The sin here is eternal because its root is in the man’s own spirit ; it is not a part of him—some one desire or ambition—running counter to the main purpose of his life, it is his whole being that is vitiated. We excuse those who do wrong through ignorance, if their ignorance was unavoidable. And we hold guilty those who do wrong knowingly ; we speak of this as “ sinning against the light ” and think of it as the worst thing in the world. But it is not that ; there is a still worse state, in which there is no light to sin against. “ If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness.” Such a man does wrong

not, as we ordinarily use the words, in ignorance ; there is no mistake which can be corrected by further understanding or instruction ; he does wrong, knowing that men call it wrong, but not caring whether it is wrong or not. Right and wrong have no value for him ; and so he cannot feel shame, he cannot repent, and therefore he cannot be forgiven. He is guilty of an eternal sin. He may still encounter something that will break up his whole temper of mind and soul, so that a new life may yet open before him, but until that happens he is irredeemable. His sin is of the quality that belongs to the eternal world ; it may be destroyed in some convulsion of his being ; but while it lasts it is unpardonable ; while it lasts (if the phrase may be allowed) it is eternal.

This moral indifference and incapacity, to which we may sink or drift through continuance in wrong doing (for every neglect of conscience weakens the authority of conscience and blunts its sensibility), this is one of the poles of human life. And the other is eternal redemption. Let us ask how this is spoken of in the New Testament.

The Jewish religion had provided a whole system for making reparation for sin. No doubt the whole of it was symbolic; the blood of the animal-victim represented life, and that the life not of the animal but of the penitent worshipper who offered it. But there was no pretence that even the great Day of Atonement could give new strength or change the heart and will; it brought to the sincerely penitent an assurance of forgiveness for the past, but no pledge of a changed purpose for the future. It provided a momentary reparation, but not an eternal redemption. That, as the Epistle to the Hebrews points out, is why these sacrifices were offered perpetually; they gained forgiveness for the past, but could not change character, so the sin was repeated, and the sacrifice was repeated also. "The law can never with the same sacrifices year by year, which they offer continually, make perfect them that draw nigh. Else would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshippers, having been once cleansed, would have had no more conscience of sins? And every priest indeed standeth day by day

ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, the which can never take away sins : but he, when he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God.”

What is the supreme difference between this sacrifice of Christ and all other sacrifices, which fixes so deep a gulf between them ? It lies just in this, that while they were momentary acts of devotion, this was a permanent and unshakable obedience expressing itself in the life of unswerving loyalty to God and the death voluntarily accepted. What we see in the last journey to Jerusalem—the journey that began on the Mount of the Transfiguration and ended on the Hill of the Crucifixion—is not a passing religious emotion nor the gratification of a generous impulse ; it is the steady purpose to fulfil the destiny of a life. And so we rightly apply to Him the words of the Psalm : “ In whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure ; then said I, Lo, I am come to do Thy will, O God.” Single acts of worship or of reparation were not what was demanded ; God requires the dedication of

the whole of life: "Lo, I am come to do Thy will, O God." "By the which will," the writer goes on, "we have been sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Here is eternal redemption. Just as the eternal sin is a sin which so completely expresses our nature that we feel no shame at it, no better self condemning it, so eternal redemption is the devotion of the whole being to God, with such completeness that no part of us rebels—the obedience whose type for evermore is the Life that was "obedient unto death, yea, even the death of the Cross."

Now we often think that the unpardonable sin must be something of which only great criminals are guilty; Judas Iscariot, perhaps, and Caiaphas, or Cesare Borgia, or Napoleon. But, as a matter of fact, every one of us is guilty. The degree to which that sin, that indifference to right or wrong, has actually infected our whole nature may vary greatly; but we are all touched by it. At one point or another we are allowing ourselves in wrongdoing or in a wrong habit of mind; we are content to be selfish, or dishonest,

or untruthful, or snobbish ; we are careless in the way we express our feelings or our thoughts, so that we hurt people whom there was no call to hurt, and then rather pride ourselves on that false sincerity ; or we let ourselves persist in thoughts or actions which in our hearts we know to be unclean ; all of us in one way or another are failing to fulfil the law of Christ, and are content so to fail. And so each of us in his own degree is guilty of an eternal sin—a sin which cannot be treated as something momentary, and so pardoned ; while it remains in us we are not fit for pardon ; our self-complacency must be broken up, and we must begin again. And so long as this sin of moral blindness remains in us, it will inevitably be poisoning our whole nature, until perhaps at last our whole character is infected with it and we become altogether indifferent to right and wrong, which is spiritual death.

And quite equally is eternal redemption within everybody's reach. For though it was won by Christ alone, by the Life and Death of uttermost obedience, it is available for all, because in that Life and Death is a

power to which we may submit and by which our lives may be remodelled after the same pattern. By Christ's accomplishment of the will of God we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Do you ask how it can be true that Christ's merits and sufferings avail to set us right with God? It is not because God accepts His sufferings in place of the penalty due to us; but it is because the beauty of that perfect obedience, and the knowledge of what our sin brings upon Him, reveals to us the odiousness of our sin and wins us away from it. We can plead that sacrifice on our own behalf because it has transforming power, and as we meditate upon it, it will purify and ennoble us. That is why it is right that

between our sins and their reward
We set the Passion of Thy Son our Lord.

That is, or should be, what we mean when we pray—

Look, Father, look on His anointed Face,
And only look on us as found in Him.

“As found in Him”—seen in the character that will be ours when His work upon us and

within us is complete. Here is the eternal redemption—in obedience to God that arises from the depths of the Spirit of Christ and enters into the depths of our spirits, as His Spirit bears witness with our spirits that, however we may disgrace our lineage, we are yet children of God.

To-day is Passion Sunday; next week we shall be recalling the supreme act of Christ's obedience in which was won eternal redemption. Between that obedience and eternal sin our lives are swaying. Let us resolve to use that time of meditation so that Easter may be for us a resurrection to newness of life. It is our sin that drives Him to His Death; yet His Death is the means whereby our sin may be destroyed.

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness”—for the power in which we trust is Almighty and irresistible—“to enter into the holy place”—the very presence of God—“by the blood of Jesus”—in the inspiration of His obedience unto death—“by the way which He dedicated for us”—He has trodden the path Himself—“a new and living way”—for we must serve Him not only with our lips

but in our lives—"through the veil, that is to say His flesh"—for only as we share His human life of obedience and sacrifice do we find the Divinity expressed in it—"let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance"—for He has been lifted up from the earth and if we will but remember Him, He will draw us to Himself.

XVII

TEMPTATION

May 3, 1914.

S. James, i. 2.—"Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations."

BUT if so, why does our Lord tell us to pray "Lead us not into temptation"? If we are to count it joy when we fall into it, why should we pray not to be led into it?

St. James follows up the words I have quoted by giving the reason for them. "The proof—or testing—of your faith worketh patience—or endurance." A character that has passed through temptation unstained and unwarped has about it more strength and stability than it had before ever temptation assailed it. Any temptation that comes to us unsought can be made an opportunity for winning strength. So there is no ground for depression

of spirits when temptations come ; on the contrary, we should count it all joy, because in overcoming the temptation we shall gain strength of character which we may use for any purpose in life.

Moral strength must be won in exactly the same way as any other sort of strength ; we always win strength by resistance to something. If you want to develop your physical strength you exert your muscles against some resisting force—usually against the force of gravitation : if nothing resists, your strength is not exercised and therefore is not developed. But when you have in this way developed the muscles of your body, you can use them in whatever way you like. The strength can be employed not only in repeating the exercises by which it was won but in countless other ways besides.

So too our intellectual powers are increased by being set perpetually to tackle problems that give us some difficulty ; the difficulty must not be too great or we can never start upon it, just as the child cannot lift the weight which the trained man carries easily. But we set our minds to work upon problems

which really tax our strength, and as soon as we find that stage becoming easy we pass on to another so that our strength may still be taxed and therefore may still develop. And when our mental powers are so trained we can use them for any purpose, and not only to do again what we have learnt at school to do. The object of learning to write Latin prose is not that one may afterwards write Latin prose, though there are some oddly constituted people who do it for amusement ; but the object is partly to gain an understanding of the Latin language which may help us to appreciate the great Roman writers, but much more it is to train us in accuracy of thought and expression—an accomplishment of inestimable value for every occupation in life. Our great statesmen have mostly been men trained in the classics, men who have won the power, by which they guided our national destiny, through the study of literature, history and philosophy. If there is anything that seems remote from such study it is finance, and the management of money. But Mr. Gladstone's biographer is emphatic that, while his minute study of Homer and of

Dante was no doubt a source of endless pleasure to himself, the full fruit of that study is to be found in the combined largeness of grasp and mastery of detail which marked his wonderful Budgets.

One might pursue that theme at some length; but my point just now is that in matters intellectual, strength when won is available for any purpose in just the same way as bodily strength.

And the same is true also of moral strength. In meeting and resisting temptations we win a strength which can afterwards be used not only against those temptations but against all others, and not only against temptations but also for positive service to the Kingdom of God.

For this reason, one side of our education consists in submitting us to steadily widening temptations. At first we are watched every minute of the day; but as we grow out of infancy and early childhood we begin to be allowed a little liberty, which means, as it always means, the power to choose how we will spend our time. But the giving of liberty always means in greater or less

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degree its abuse. We must learn to stand on our own feet and to live our own lives ; we shall trip and stumble sometimes, as we did in learning to walk ; but there is no help for it ; you can't learn to swim first and only get into the water afterwards ; you can't learn to live first and only begin to live afterwards. But it is possible to learn to swim in calm water, and in the company of friends who will help if necessary, before trying to swim alone in a rough sea ; and it is possible to learn to live by stages, and with the helps that will save us from serious disaster at the outset. So we do not begin by trying to find some place for ourselves in the turmoil of the work-a-day world, but we are sent to preparatory schools and later on to public schools, precisely that we may learn the use of liberty stage by stage. At every stage there are fresh opportunities of wrong and new temptations. That is the very value of the process. Gradually we become more and more completely masters of our own time, and of our own faculties.

Very often people are distressed when

some wholly new temptation begins to trouble them, especially if it is one of those which arise from the growth of our own nature. It seems to them so terrible that they think they would never have even felt such a temptation unless there were something wrong with them. But that is quite untrue. There is nothing to be miserable about. We need to be as serious as we can and as much in earnest as we can. But to be distressed will only weaken our resistance. To every temptation that arises let us say, "Here is a new opportunity of winning strength. If I yield, that is a step back ; but if I resist and at last drive the temptation right away, that is a step forward. I shall not only have avoided doing wrong ; I shall have won more strength with which to work for God and men." "Count it all joy, then, when ye fall into manifold temptations."

And yet, never seek them. You will find in life quite enough for discipline of character and the winning of strength ; and if they come unsought, you will know that they are part of God's plan for you, and He will help you to overcome them if you are in earnest in

fighting them and trust to His power. But never seek them for yourself. It may be right for a man of high spirit to desire a career in which he will be required to risk his life for his country ; it can never be right to desire either work or pleasure in which he will be required to risk his character. The ordinary course of life and duty may bring such risks, and then we will face them, taking the breastplate of righteousness and the shield of faith. But we can never *desire* to risk our character ; “ for what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? ”

Our Lord does not tell us to pray to be delivered from temptation as we pray that we may be delivered from actual evil. “ Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” We will face whatever temptations beset our appointed path, but we ask that we may never be led off that path to find temptations. Perhaps we shall best see the meaning of this petition in the Lord’s Prayer if we contrast the right temper to which it gives expression with the wrong temper opposed to it.

This opposite temper of mind is that which

is ambitious to increase its experience, to the neglect of right and wrong ; as when a man says that you must try all the kinds of life before you can choose which is the best, that you must experiment in this direction and in that before you can say what manner of life is really good. But that sort of policy is always fatal, for the material in which you experiment is itself the instrument by which the result is to be tested. It is sheer folly to give oneself over to some indulgence just to see what it is like, because in the process you will develop appetites and tastes which will bias your judgment. To satisfy an idle whim you may do irreparable damage. Imagine a man looking at a beautiful statue and seized with a desire to see how much it would be altered if some one feature were spoilt ; he takes a hammer and smashes some part of the statue's face ; and he satisfies his curiosity. But he can never restore in real perfection the beauty he has spoilt. So a man may throw away his innocence from a desire for wider experience and a wish to feel that he knows all that there is to know ; and at the end he will know chiefly this—that the innocence

he threw away was better than all the knowledge he has gained, and that innocence is gone beyond recall.

The wrong lies in the desire to take our lives into our own keeping and out of the keeping of God. He has marked out a path for us to follow. We shall find there problems and dangers that will tax all our faculties for wisdom or courage. Loyalty to duty and God will prove to be as great a thing as we can ever hope to achieve. The desire to leave that appointed path in order to be, or to be thought, a sportsman or a man of spirit is itself one of the temptations that many of us have to meet and conquer.

Let us take another illustration from the sculptor. Our natures with all their ambitions and passions are the raw material out of which we have to shape what kind of life we choose. The sculptor stands before his marble block ; he can make of it what he likes ; he can make a noble figure that may stand before worshippers as the likeness of their god, or he can make some hunch-back dwarf or other deformity. So each of us has to choose what he will make of his natural gifts. Perhaps

he may decide to indulge all his desires for a time, and after having his fill of pleasure to settle down to his duty as a respectable citizen and to the service of his fellows. But it is little duty or service that he will do with his faculties wasted by indulgence, with his brain that cannot think accurately, with his will that cannot hold fast to any purpose. To satisfy an idle whim he has made of his marble block a hunch-back dwarf; and though by ruthless lopping off and hacking away he may yet produce a figure which is pleasant enough on a puny scale, he has lost for evermore the chance of becoming in himself the likeness of God.

XVIII

THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

June 14, 1914.

S. Matt. v. 48.—"Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

WE find it very hard to believe that our Lord meant what He said. Very many of His quite plain utterances we try to prune down to suit our own notions or our own practice. And so we say that such words as these cannot mean quite what they say; indeed for a man to aspire after the perfection of God would be presumptuous and almost profane. And thus we protect ourselves from this inconveniently large demand upon our wills by means of pious-sounding phrases. But there the words are—plain enough: "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

And our annoyance is not diminished when we come to ask what is the form which God's perfection and ours must take ; for it is an unwavering kindness of heart, endless forgiveness, complete freedom from censoriousness or any approach to indignation. " Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you ; that ye may be the sons of your Father which is in Heaven ; for he maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." The immense self-control and restraint which is needed if we are to obey the command, find no compensation in a right thereby gained to sit in judgment on our fellows ; for the perfection at which we are to aim is first and foremost a universal and imperturbable kindness of heart.

To any one who reflects upon the course of our whole civilisation it is plain enough that we need some supreme virtue which shall regulate all the others. If you ask an average Englishman what qualities he most admires, he will probably give in answer : " Truthfulness, courage, sincerity, self-control, public spirit, self-devotion." And those are no doubt

fine qualities and great virtues. Yet we notice this about them ; any one of them may act as part of a motive to crime, and some of the greatest crimes in history have been committed by men who had all these qualities in a conspicuous degree. These virtues make a man efficient, but do not at all determine the direction in which he is to be efficient. Whether they are efficient for good or for evil will depend upon whether the man is more marked by kindness or by hardness of heart. Charity is the very bond of peace and of all virtues, and without it whosoever liveth is counted dead before God. So St. Paul says—" If I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal." No self-sacrifice nor heroism is of avail if this quality be lacking. " If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long and is kind "—and so on through the whole of that lyrical ode which is his portrait of his Lord.

With this as our starting point we could with much labour work out for ourselves

the whole outline of the Christian character. But that has been done for us in the series of points selected for blessing in the Beatitudes with which this Sermon on the Mount begins. As we look at them all together we become aware that they describe an exquisitely delicate balance or poise of character. The first and basic virtue is humility or poverty in spirit. It is the temper of the man who makes no claim for himself ; who is altogether detached from the attractions of worldly wealth or position ; the man who all his life remains teachable and ready to learn ; just as the scientist or historian or philosopher should set no store by his own theory because it is his own, but be ready to follow the guidance of facts as they are presented to him. This absence of all self-consciousness is the fundamental virtue without which some at least of the others will be altogether odious. What could be more offensive than a self-conscious peacemaker—interfering with great sense of his own virtue in the quarrel of two other people ? Yet what can be more lovely than the gentle and self-forgetting character in whose presence quarrelling is impossible ?

But this humility is not to be a mere quiet and easy-going lack of assertiveness. The man will not assert himself; but he will assert his standards of right and will mourn over the failure of the world to reach them. The possible weakness in humility is at once corrected by the insistence on a standard that makes the world look vile and wretched. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are they that mourn."

But if so he will tend to be impatient and overbearing; he will see that the world is bad and will be eager to set it right. If others are indifferent or oppose his schemes, they must be fought down in the name of God: surely grief over evil demands that we should deal sternly with those who neglect or refuse the remedy. No; it is not so in fact. No permanent good has ever yet been done by anger or violence or bluster. For what we want is to promote universal kindness of heart and that can never be done by aggressive methods. "Blessed are the meek—or the gentle; for they shall inherit the earth." This meekness is no cringing quality; it is only possible to those who are so strong that

they cannot be roused to violence of speech or action. "If a man can substitute reason for anger in himself he will also substitute reason for anger in others." It may take a long while; the practical man may think such a method inefficient. Judged by such a standard God is woefully inefficient; His action is so slow and gentle, His tolerance of evil so incredibly patient, that even good men doubt whether He exists at all. But though this method is slow, it is the only one that can entirely succeed. To win by violence and aggression always leaves a minority, conquered perhaps but unconverted; only patience and gentleness can hope for a universal dominion. "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth."

But again this patience and gentleness must never lapse into indifference. We are to desire righteousness in the world as a hungry man desires food or as a thirsty man desires drink. We are to be full of zeal for the cause of God. If our method is to be gentleness, our spirit must be resolute. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness."

But this zeal too is the source of a temptation; for the man possessed by it will wish to condemn and to punish those who offend. He is no longer impatient or angry; but with calm judicial purpose he will sacrificially cut off the offending member. But that is not God's way. If there is one superstitious belief which is more unchristian than another it is the notion that God will intervene with judgments on the wicked. "He is kind toward the unthankful and evil"; "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." It may be right sometimes to be stern, that we may bring home to light-hearted folk the seriousness of wrong-doing; but mere punishment is always futile and wicked; it is only right when behind the punishment is a real longing to help, which will show itself in gentleness and friendship so soon as there is desire for amendment. But in England if a man does wrong—for example, if he steals—he is sent to prison, which may conceivably be right; and when he comes out, instead of being welcomed back by the community which he had injured

he finds it hard to get honourable employment. And some men even glorify this as a sign of social righteousness, saying that the man has forfeited his claim to honourable treatment. Indeed, most conceptions of justice, when set in the light of Christ's revelation of God, turn out to be wickeder than most crimes. To deal with a man according to his deserts is to repudiate the Gospel from beginning to end ; the Gospel would have us deal with men according to their needs. What were our deserts when Christ died for us ? He did not die for us because we were so good ; He died for us because we were so bad. Yet we, who call ourselves His disciples, are content to cut off from ordinary fellowship the people who most need help. Our zeal for righteousness must work through mercy ; " Blessed are the merciful." We must deal with men according to their needs ; if they need the restraining or the bracing influence of punishment we shall not withhold it ; but such punishment will always be a means, not in any conceivable circumstances an end in itself.

Yet again this mercy and kindness to

wrong-doers must never obscure the high purpose to which our lives are given nor cloud our spiritual vision. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." We shall be eager to help the sinner; but must never lose sight of the sinfulness of his sin. We must keep our own course straight, and be free from all lower motives than the love which is the very nature of God; living in that love we shall see Him.

Such a man will be a peacemaker without ever trying to be. His presence will rebuke quarrelsomeness. The whole method of his life will diminish the causes of bitterness in the world. "Blessed are the peacemakers." But because men love their anger and enjoy pronouncing condemnation, such a man will also be much persecuted. "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake."

You will agree now that there is no exaggeration in speaking of the Christian character as an exquisitely delicate balance or poise of qualities. It is so easy to be gentle if one has no zeal for the right. It is so easy to be zealous if we allow ourselves to be censorious.

Width of sympathy without earnestness of purpose will make us flabby and ineffective. Earnestness of purpose without width of sympathy will make us harsh and domineering. It is so easy to be good in one way or another ; but that partial goodness is as much bad as good. What we are called to is not easy : “ Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

XIX

THE ECONOMY OF HISTORY

COMMEMORATION SUNDAY

June 28, 1914.

Heb. xi. 39, 40.—"These all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect."

THE writer has been reviewing the history of his people, as it was inspired and guided by the faith of its saints and heroes. From Abel to Abraham he traces it; from Abraham to Moses, to David, to the Maccabees. And immediately afterwards, appealing to the overwhelming authority of their testimony to the power of faith, he bids us fix our gaze on yet another and a greater example of its efficacy: "seeing we are compassed about

with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the pattern and perfection of faith." But before passing on to that climax of his argument and rhetoric he pauses for a moment to reflect that these great ones of the past, for all their heroism and nobility, never received what God had promised, because He had ordained that they without us should not be made perfect.

As we look over Christian history we see one illustration after another of the same principle. No movement ever reaches its goal. The splendid and reckless idealism of the Middle Ages, which tried to realise God's kingdom in the world by giving all authority to His professional representatives, could never achieve what it aimed at; the Papacy in its great days was the noblest effort that mankind has yet made; nothing to equal it in loftiness of aspiration or thoroughness of scientific reasoning can elsewhere be found among the political achievements of men; but it had not in it all that was to mark the Kingdom of God, and it received not the promise.

The new era was initiated by the Renaissance which revived in some degree the old passion of intellect which was the supreme gift of ancient Greece; and following hard upon this came the huge eruption of the Reformation, whose premonitory mutterings may be heard in Francis and Wickliffe and Huss and Savonarola, but which only came in full flood when the Teutonic Reformation brought back into complete vitality the Hebrew sense of the supremacy of duty; so that if it be true that the mediæval Church was too predominantly Latin, these two great movements brought again into prominence the other two main sources of the spiritual life of Christendom. For European Christendom at any rate has always drawn its nurture from those three sources—Palestine, Greece and Rome. But still there was not in the world the adequate embodiment of the Spirit of Christ and God, and neither Renaissance nor Reformation could receive the promise.

The Reformation broke the Church and for the first time gave people the conception that different Christian bodies might exist

side by side ; and for this reason the chief spiritual movements of Europe have from that time onwards taken a less ecclesiastical form. No one who is conscious of spiritual impulse is seriously hampered by the traditions of his own religious body, because if the strain becomes intolerable he can join another or even start a new one ; with the result that the destructive activities which inevitably accompany new advances of spiritual life are now seen mostly in the political, and still more the social or economic spheres, for it is only there that liberty is any longer seriously curtailed, that men still suffer under tyranny and the gall of oppression.

Since the French Revolution did for the idea of Government what the Reformation had done for the idea of the Church, our public life has been a long series of movements all excellent within their limits, all successful in a considerable degree, all failing entirely to reach their goal. The Republicanism of Mazzini and his friends, our own Mid-Victorian Liberalism and Radicalism, State Socialism, even Syndicalism, if its day as I believe is already closing, have followed

each other with boundless expectation ; but none of them received the promise ; upon each its own future development imposed a check, that they without it should not be made perfect.

And so in every generation we do well to look back for inspiration, but we must look forward for our goal. They received not the promise ; nor shall we ; until the building of the Body of the Christ is complete and we all come—all of all races and times—to a perfect Man, the measure of the stature of the completion of the Christ, when all our life will be transformed :—still city and country life with all their manifold pursuits, but no leading into captivity and no complaining in our streets ; still richer and poorer, but no thoughtless luxury, no grinding destitution ; still sorrow, but no bitterness ; still failures, but no oppression ; still Church and World, but both together perpetually celebrating the one Divine Service which is the Service of Mankind ; still Priest and People, yet both alike unitedly presenting before the Eternal Father the one unceasing sacrifice of human life—the Body broken and the Blood out-

poured—in the day when the kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ.

Now in that onward-sweeping flood of man's divinely guided history our school must take its place. We too commemorate our heroes ; but we too must remember that they received not the promise, and could not receive it, till we had brought our little contribution to the great edifice, just as we too must wait for the contribution of our successors. They served the school because they had ideals ; but in whatever degree they were idealists they must have seen that the school fell short of what they would have it be ; otherwise they would have fallen into contentment and so have contributed nothing. So it is their spirits that urge us not merely to be doing what they did, but precisely out of loyalty to them to press forward in our day as they did in theirs, that we may do something to bring nearer that for which they laboured, the promise which they did not receive.

When a nation looks back to its heroes of the past it is liable to fasten attention on its fighters ; when a Church looks back

it is often to the upholders of its rights. We are saved from such blunders as these. The men whom we commemorate to-day were not clamorous nor militant; they did not strive nor cry nor lift up their voice in the streets. But they quietly served God in or through this school as they saw opportunity.

This Chapel is already full of memorials to those whose lives testify to the power of faith; but all of them point past themselves to another—to Jesus, the pattern and perfection of faith, who trod the path of faith before us and trod it perfectly to the end.

How do we know that He is such? Just by the fact that for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the Cross despising shame. Filled with a boundless zeal for the cause of God, so that concerning Him His friends would quote the words, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up," He entered on a course which led inevitably to His Death. All the world was against Him; all He had attempted failed; the very disciples forsook Him and fled; His own soul had been racked with doubt and despair; yet He confronts the High Priest

and the Governor with the silence that is prouder than speech, and chooses the moment of most apparent failure for the first utterance of His extravagant claim. Never was faith so sorely tested by obstacles without and perplexities within. But the joy was set before Him—the joy of a world which through Him should have learnt the secret of life—for that joy He would despise shame, for that joy He would bear death.

Let us give heed to those who testify of faith, as they bid us fix our eyes not on themselves but on Him. So through the growing faith of ourselves and those who come after us, we may all together receive the promise and become fellow labourers with God, swept onwards by the impulse of His Spirit, even, if it may be, sharers in His redemptive sacrifice, and our beloved Repton be as one small company in the advancing armies of the Lord of hosts, one ripple on the flowing tide of the Divine purpose, even, if God's infinite Love and Mercy permit, one drop in the sacred Chalice wherein is for ever offered the Blood which was outpoured that it might give life to men.

XX

GOOD-BYE

July 26, 1914.

S. John, xv. 4.—"Abide in me, and I in you."

THESE words formed part of my text when I first preached in this Chapel nearly four years ago; they shall also be the basis of what I say to you to-day, when I speak here for the last time as Headmaster. For after all, this is the Christian religion. Christianity is Christ Himself. It will lead to a particular theory of life and of the world which is called Christian doctrine; it will lead also to a particular type of conduct, which is called Christian duty; but it is not exhausted even by these two together. It is possible to believe intellectually every article of every creed and still be scarcely Christian at all; it is possible to live for the service of others

and still be incompletely and insecurely Christian. The only genuine Christianity is to abide in Him, and He in us ; and the only way to attain to that is to feed upon Him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

The most elementary things are always the most important ; and it is of them that I would speak to-day. When is it that a man needs religion ? You will meet with very many people who live admirable lives, without any religious belief or practice, and without feeling the need of any. And yet there come times to any man when he is confronted with a moral demand which he cannot meet or a moral opportunity to which he cannot rise. If he has never become conscious of the power of religious faith in life, he may very likely never realise that in that moment he is really needing just that power.

On the whole, apart from some plain and significant choices, the general tenour of our lives is just about what circumstances make it. This does not relieve us of responsibility, for we are ourselves among the circumstances which mould the characters of other people ;

but it points the limit of our possible achievement so long as we rely on our own strength alone. For indeed, that is always next to nothing. When we think we rely on our own strength, we are always in fact relying on the supporting power of that section of society to which we belong—on the traditions of our family or school, or the tacitly accepted standards of our set. In the end, as we think about it, we come to see that St. Paul's summary of the situation is entirely exact; there are two great societies on earth and only two—the Church and the World: and all of us belong to both. No doubt in the course of history the World has to some degree accepted the standards of the Church, and the Church has to a very great degree accepted the standards of the World; and yet, though our secular society is partly Christian and our religious society is mainly pagan, it is still true that there are two great groups of influences playing on our lives; the one is represented by the man who was disobedient in order to increase his own experience of life in the knowledge of good and evil, and the other is represented by the man who was

obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. And the choice where our wills are freest is the choice of the influences which shall play upon our lives.

And that choice only works on one side. For we cannot escape from the World, the society of Adam. We shall live among people who believe that to get on in the world, as they phrase it, is the one obvious duty of life. If we are contemplating an act involving some self-sacrifice, our friends will usually try to dissuade us, and suppose that they are acting kindly. That group of influences will act upon us in any case. But if you wish none the less to conform to the other type, if you wish to maintain your renunciation of the World—the World which is, roughly speaking, represented by the *Times* and the *Spectator* — the World which is so highly respectable and so incapable of heroism—then you must deliberately submit yourself to the other group of influences; you must hold fast to Christ Himself, in constant Bible reading, in regular and frequent prayer and communion; you must unite yourself with His disciples in corporate worship

and in the general life of the Church, in and through that section of it to which you belong, whatever it may be. The influences of our ordinary society may make you a good man in the ordinary sense—honest, self-controlled, generous, public-spirited, but yet always putting the interest of self or family slightly before all others. But if you are ambitious of more than this, if you would like to be able to say as your life closes that it has all been spent in pursuit of the welfare of your fellows, then you must abide in Christ and He in you. For His appeal is for heroism—not indeed the spectacular heroism of war or melodrama, nor anything else appropriate to be impersonated by the proverbial operatic tenor, but for the more arduous nobility of the life that disregards itself, even when there is no glory nor even credit to be won and scarcely any purpose to be achieved. No one will live like that except in the power of the transforming influence of Christ.

We often think that all we need is strength and courage to do our duty as we see it. But the primary need is to see our duty as it

really is. And it is in this illumination of the moral perceptions that the power of religion is most of all to be seen.

There is one very effective way of testing our standards, and that is to challenge our consciences with the Missionary appeal. The Church was founded to bring the knowledge of Christ to those that had it not ; and that remains the primary duty of every Christian. We ought to feel that Foreign Missionary work is the obvious employment for our lives, unless we can be sure of serving Christ better in another way. We ought not to think it an out of the way vocation that comes to a few people, but rather put to ourselves the question, " Am I going to be a Foreign Missionary ? and if not, why not ? " Many of us—perhaps most of us—will genuinely find our God-appointed work at home. But we shall remember that it is work at home rather than among the heathen, which requires justification ; and that memory will correct our standards.

But do we want to see more duties and harder duties than we see already ? Do we want to become entirely unselfish ? Every-

thing leads us at last to the question, "What think ye of Christ?"

"Like you this Christianity or not?"

It may be false, but will you wish it true?

Has it your vote to be so if it can?"

The Cross stands as the pivot of history and the touchstone of character. "We preach a Messiah on a Cross, to Jews a scandal and to Gentiles an absurdity, but to the very people who are called, both Jews and Greeks, a Messiah who is God's power and God's wisdom." Which do we believe it in our hearts to be? Was the choice of that life an act of folly? Is the claim that it is the Life Divine a scandal? Or, to bring it nearer home, if you hear of a man who has given up the chance of great wealth, because he thinks that he can be of more use in a less lucrative post, do you think that he has acted foolishly? If we think that, we are classed and judged as belonging to the world. Or is "the acknowledgment of God in Christ" just the illumination of our darkness and the strengthening of our weakness? If we find that, we are classed and judged as belonging to the Body of Christ.

There He stands in the middle of history, and the whole of it turns about Him. He died two thousand years ago, yet you cannot pass Him by. You may deliberately ignore Him ; you may repudiate Him ; or you may become a disciple and a worshipper. But some attitude towards Him you are absolutely bound to adopt ; and by that action you are judged. You think you are passing sentence upon Him and His claim, even as Pilate thought and Caiaphas. But it is not so ; it is we who are judged, not He.

What sentence then shall we pass upon ourselves ? Shall it not be that we accept now the invitation which we are bound to accept at last ? “ Abide in Me, and I in you.” We may shrink from His presence, but we cannot escape it ; we try to fend off the embrace of that “ tremendous Lover,” but always at the last in vain. From infancy He has been binding us to Himself. In Baptism and early teaching, in the discipline of our childhood and the growth of our affections, in our Confirmation and Communion, in the merging of our lives in the general life of this school, whose centre is the House

of His worship,—in all this He has been calling us and binding us to Himself. And yet He will not intrude into the secret places of our hearts and wills until we call Him in. With wonderful patience He stands at the door of our hearts and knocks until of our own free will we open to Him. We must be willing to abide in Him ere He will abide in us.

Up till now the most powerful influence drawing us towards Him has been the school to which we belong. No doubt here, as in His own Church, there is much that is contrary to His Spirit. And yet the whole order of our life expresses that Spirit, and what opposes His Spirit tends also to break up that order; for selfishness and even self-centredness unfits a boy, in proportion to its intensity, for effective membership of his House or School. Dignity here is a dignity of service, even if the sphere of that service be so trifling as a game; to win a position, broadly speaking, a boy must do something for his House. Self can only be served through at least some service of others. And the one place where the whole school meets and acts together day by day is its Chapel. We take this for

granted, and through not thinking of what it means lose some of its value. For it means that our life is ordered by the faith that God in Christ is the presiding genius of the place.

And now from this school some of us are passing on to other stages in the discipline of our souls. We shall carry with us for evermore the impress of our life here. We are Reptonians now till death and beyond it. The love of Repton will be in our hearts and the purpose to uphold its honour in our wills. And we shall remember that Repton is first and foremost a Christian school; and therefore in loyalty to our membership of it we shall try to abide in Christ, seeking His will in prayer, and the power of His Presence in Communion, and striving to obey His one and only commandment that we should love one another.

That at least we have begun to do. For the best and most Christian thing about any school is a true and pure school friendship.

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